[redacted]

CANADIAN POLICE COLLEGE

COLLÈGE CANADIEN DE POLICE

102-04412/

YOUTHS AND GANGS: VARIOUS VIEWS, RANDOM DATA AND VARIED STRATEGIES

by
Nicole Soullière, M.Sc.

Research Centre
Canadian Police College

1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY V

CHAPTER ONE STATUS REPORT 1

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION 2

2. BACKGROUND 3
SUMMARY: 5

3. PROBLEMS CURRENTLY FACING THE RESEARCHERS 5
SUMMARY 8

4. ESTIMATED SIZE OF GANGS 8
SUMMARY: 12

5. GANGS AND STEREOTYPES 13
5.1 A FEW RECURRING STEREOTYPES 13
5.2 VIOLENCE AND DRUGS: AN ILL-DEFINED RELATIONSHIP 15
5.3 GANG MEMBERS: WHO ARE THEY? WHERE ARE THEY? 16
SUMMARY 18

6. THE GANG AS AN ORGANIZATION 19
6.1 GENERAL TYPOLOGY 19
6.1.1 TURF 19
6.1.2 MEMBER TYPOLOGY 20
6.1.3 DEGREE OF COHESION 20
6.1.4. SIZE 21
6.2 ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT AN ORGANIZATION 21
SUMMARY 23

7. THE GANG'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS COMMUNITY 23
SUMMARY 25

8. POLICIES REGARDING GANGS 26
8.1 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION 26
8.2. THE FIVE EXISTING STRATEGIES 27
8.3 RESPONSE STRATEGIES: A CRITICAL APPROACH 28
8.4. RESPONSE STRATEGIES: THE BEST INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS 32
SUMMARY 36

9. CONCLUSION 38

CHAPTER TWO SYNOPTIC SUMMARIES 41

1. INTRODUCTION 42

2. REFERENCE MATERIAL - SUMMARIES 42

3. COMPLEMENTARY REFERENCE MATERIAL 66

4. ONGOING PROJECTS 68

5. CONCLUSION 69

Should you wish to obtain extra copies or forward us your comments, kindly contact

The Research Centre
Canadian Police College
P.O. Box 8900
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 3J2

Tel.: (613) 990-9738
E-mail: mlebeuf@cpc.gc.ca

Ce rapport est également disponible en français.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. General Introduction

During the Spring of 1997 the Canadian Police College, along with other participants (health, education, public security) were invited to a series of preliminary meetings concerning youth gangs in the Outaouais area. As a result of the meetings, an exercise in the systematic compilation of the literature on youth gangs was introduced. We wish to show, in fact, that the problem is broad, that is has been studied by many different theoretical perspectives and that the solutions are as well varied and complex and are not necessarily applied by police forces. The purpose of this document is to inform police officers, who come in contact with young people during the performance of their duties, of the results of the latest research on youth gangs, including such information as the various response strategies and their positive or negative impact on young people.

Our perception of street gangs and the significance and nature of the problem has varied considerably over the past decades. In this chapter, we shall map out the research done on various youth gang related themes.

Generally speaking, the reader will realize that the problem of street gangs is a very complex one and that there is no apparent miracle cure for quickly and radically eradicating problems that are related or thought to be related to youth gangs.

2. Background

For the 20's, as in the case of the 50's and 60's, there is a great deal of research material on youth gangs. During the 60's, the theme is merged with that of juvenile delinquency. After being put on the backburner during the 70's, the theme surfaced again among American researchers during the 80's. This research was, for the most part, done at the request of the Federal Government. It was at this time that street gangs began to be viewed as a national problem, even though gang activity related crime accounted only for a very small portion of the overall crime picture, according to Spergel (1995). From then on, for certain researchers, gangs were no longer seen as non-aggressive socializing structures, but more of a threat. In any case, the researchers as a whole were faced with another context and the theories at their disposal were somewhat obsolete.

3. Problems Currently Faced by the Researchers

Both in the United States and in Canada, the literature on street gangs points to the problems encountered by researchers in accessing reliable statistical data and standard definitions. In fact, this is not surprising. Indeed, it can readily be seen that the people, who are interested in youth gangs, are not talking about the same thing and are not addressing the gang issue the same way. Each researcher appears to elaborate on a problematic model that concerns himself, according to his own perception of youth gangs, his occupation and his interests. The response procedure and the policies implemented are based on this model.

Estimated Size of Gangs

In the United States, according to Spergel (1995), youth gangs account for 5 to 10% of the adolescent population. In spite of a hike in gang-related serious crimes, in several American cities, serious crimes account for only a small percentage of serious crimes overall, whether violent or not.

In Canada, according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (1994), the official statistics point to an increase in violent crimes. Furthermore, the crime rate among youths has levelled off during the past five to ten years. This is why, the Federation is urging us to be careful in interpreting these statistics. Indeed, this increase in violent crimes among youths can be accounted for by the different definitions of violence, by a lower tolerance, by more frequent statements and by the *Young Offenders Act*. The Federation even goes as far as to say that there was more violence in the past than there is now and that, all in all, there are few very well organized gangs in Canada.

As for Montreal, Hébert & al (1997) have submitted descriptive data on the members making up such gangs, rather than an estimate of the number of young gang members. Toronto, for its part, has reportedly identified 335 youth gangs and, in Vancouver, it is estimated that few youths are seriously involved in gangs.

Gangs and Stereotypes

As in the case of other social groups, youth gangs are likely to be prejudiced against. The social picture that we have of youth gang members and gangs is largely based on stereotypes. These stereotypes have to do with the motives that push youths to join a gang, the make-up of a gang (the kind of individuals making it up), the behaviour of a gang, the assumed crime rate and how dangerous they are. These stereotypes are largely born out of media hype. Furthermore, such stereotypes urge society to view youth gangs as being different from other youths, to establish ties that are not always pertinent between them and certain types of crime (violence and drugs) or certain cultural groups and to treat them differently.

What is important to bear in mind at this point, according to Monti (1993), is that the majority of gang members consist of male adolescents, that they tend to stay in a gang longer, because of the economic situation, and that girls have begun to form their own gangs.

The Gang as an Organization

The procedure for studying a gang as an organization is twofold. In the first case, the researcher resorts to typology. By selecting certain characteristics, they feel that they are in a position to exercise better control over gangs. In the second case, researchers address the subject of gangs from within. This is the case with Michaël S. Jankowski (1991) who considers that, if we wish to understand gang behaviour and their persistence, we must look at the gang's ability to get organized, to regenerate itself, and be careful not disregard how sophisticated it is. The policies that could apply mainly to individual members do not have much impact on the gang itself. Only those policies

that concern both the individual and the gang's organizational ability could potentially change things with respect to a gang and its persistence.

The Gang's Relationship with its Community

The gang's relationship with its community is a theme that had been all but forgotten since Trasher. However, it is turning out to be an important aspect in studying youth gangs. Indeed, according to Spergel (1995), it appears that the relationships between a gang and its community are subject to change as decades go by. Whenever the ties between a gang, its community and the latter's conventional institutions are weakened, the gang becomes more keen on exploiting the agencies of its community. It appears also, according to Jankowski (1991), that ambiguous ties develop between the members of a low income community and a gang originating from this community as a result of the close ties that bind them.

Furthermore, the socio-economic aspect of the community in which a gang is formed must never be discounted during pertinent research. Indeed, in a low income community where little attention is paid to the fate of young people, an adolescent is likely to view a gang as being his only choice (Monti, 1993; Moore, 1993). This is why, as Jackson (1993) points out, the policies of eradicating gangs, in whole or in part, are doomed to fail.

Policies Regarding Gangs

As can readily be seen, during the 50's and 60's, the policies regarding youths were first and foremost preventive. In the 70's they were more geared towards mobilization of the population and repression. The repression approach prevailed throughout the 70's and 80's. There are five main strategies presently being used, which are in most cases being combined. The repression strategy is still the most widely used one.

Developing response strategies aimed at youth gangs is a complex task. Several factors must be taken into consideration. Consequently, various thoughts and critical comments have been submitted by authors on the matter.

The first observation that comes to mind is that one of the errors made by the people and the authorities has consisted in failing to act as soon as a gang surfaces and to react with extreme measures whenever problems become too obvious to be ignored. This can be attributed in part to the fact that only people, who are directly affected, are inclined to file complaints, while the others show no interest in the matter. Whenever action is undertaken, it is never the result of a strong demand on the people's part and this leads to a lack of joint action (Monti, 1993). Furthermore, social policies do not work because, according to Jankowski (1991), everyone points the finger at poverty and a lack of opportunities, but no one makes a serious attempt to tackle these two problems. Whatever jobs are available are created for a smaller number and do not provide long term opportunities. Finally, the decision-makers wind up putting emphasis on beefing up the law because they are unable to reduce urban poverty. Legislations supporting a repressive approach merely

stigmatize even more underprivileged youths of the male gender belonging to gangs (Jackson). Furthermore, the police officers, who enforce these laws, help give more impetus to the antisocial tendencies of gang members (Spergel, 1995: Monti, 1993). Repressive strategies are deplored by the authors as a whole.

As for the community approach, one of its staunchest advocates (Spergel, 1995) states that its effectiveness is being threatened by a lack of understanding of the complex ties between youth gangs and society's major problems such as urban poverty and the lack of educational and job opportunities. There appears to be a flagrant lack of cooperation among the various government departments concerned when it comes to decision-making.

There appears to be a consensus regarding the need to better understand gangs to avoid pointless stereotyping and the social damage of wrongful action (Spergel, 1995: Jankowski, 1991: FCM, 1994). It is also important to make a distinction between the strategies that are intended for the individual members of a gang and those that are intended for the gang as such (Elder, 1996). It is also stated that a better knowledge of cultural communities would make it possible to set up appropriate social policies (Joe, 1993).

There is also a realization that the funds used to pay the costs inherent to legislations and correctional services, which are not too effective in remedying the problems related to gangs, could be better used if they were invested directly in the communities (Jackson, 1993). It is further suggested that a cooperation between police officers, citizens and community agencies is more promising that naïvely attempting to cut down on gangs (Spergel, 1995). This makes it possible for the police to place more emphasis on social intervention and for young people to change their perception of the police. Short (1990) goes even further and even considers that the police is in an ideal situation. The role of police officers could undergo a radical change, i.e. from work that places emphasis on crime to work that places emphasis on supporting and strengthening the community by helping it develop.

By placing emphasis on mediation, community agencies, research methods and research finding interpretation at the same time, the police and the community would undergo a major overhaul. The objective of such an approach is to promote a community in which family life, work, religion, education, the police and the other institutions reflect common values. Short (1990) gives an example of a project initiated in Chicago under the name of Beethoven Project (Center for Successful Child Development in Chicago) and affecting approximately 20000 individuals, where 90 % of the people are black and three quarters of family heads are women.

In Canada, there are also programs which, as in the case above, are made up of a group of stakeholders, including police officers. In Chapter Two, we provide data on the individuals concerned.

Conclusion

It is found that those who are involved with youth gangs (researchers, police officers, educators, social workers) are not talking about the same thing and are not tackling this issue the same way. Each appears to be building a set of problems based on his own perception of youth gangs, his occupation and interests. The policies implemented and the response procedure are dependent thereon.

In terms of response strategies, when one takes stock of the findings of the various authors consulted, one realizes that some strategies are to be discarded, while others appear to hold more promise. There is a consensus among authors that a repressive approach is to be avoided. For one thing, this approach merely adds impetus to the antisocial tendencies of youth gang members and responses are always aimed at young people, the poor, the minorities and the slum dwellers. Furthermore, they point at the inherent costs of such a response as well as at the costs related to correctional services. According to the authors, these funds could be used more effectively if they invested directly in the community.

The youth gang problem is closely linked with society's broader problems. Poverty, job scarcity and lack of educational opportunities are financial problems that must be addressed before any impact can be made on the living conditions of these youths and, ipso facto, on their activities.

There is also a consensus among several authors regarding the need to better understand gangs and to differentiate between strategies that are aimed at gangs and those that are intended for their members.

The community approach appears to be the most promising. However, in spite of all the dedication on the part of those who are involved in the field, be they police officers, social workers, volunteers in a community agency or educators, the effectiveness of this approach can be sapped from the start when there is no concerted political will, **at all levels,** to react to the socio-economic plight of youth as a whole. More than mere restrictions are called for, it is necessary to ...*restructure the local economies and provide young people with economic and social alternatives to gang activities, in order to solve gang-related problems* (Monti, 1993).

CHAPTER ONE

STATUS REPORT

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

During the Spring of 1997 the Canadian Police College, along with other participants (health, education, public security) were invited to a series of preliminary meetings concerning youth gangs in the Outaouais area. As a result of the meetings, an exercise in the systematic compilation of the literature on youth gangs was introduced. We wish to show, in fact, that the problem is broad, that is has been studied by many different theoretical perspectives and that the solutions are as well varied and complex and are not necessarily applied by police forces. The purpose of this document is to inform police officers, who come in contact with young people during the performance of their duties, of the results of the latest research on youth gangs, including such information as the various response strategies and their positive or negative impact on young people.

Our perception of street gangs and the significance and nature of the problem has varied considerably over the past decades. In this chapter, we shall map out the research done on various youth gang related themes.

Most of the sources are American. Americans have been dealing with this problem for a long time and the sociologists of that country became interested in this subject as early as in the 20's. It should be noted, however, that apart from Spergel, Miller, Klein and Whyte, who have been studying this issue since the sixties, the interest shown by the authors has been very sporadic.

Generally speaking, the reader will realize that the youth gang problem is very complex and that there does not appear to be a miracle cure for eliminating problems that are related to youth gangs or that are believed to be related to youth gangs.

The players whose lives revolve around this phenomenon are, among others, the police officers, social workers, youth protection personnel, educators, the general public and young people themselves. However, these players do not all share the same views, or even the same interests.

Consequently, they do not contemplate solutions to at least alleviate gang problems and those that are related to them. Furthermore, they do not have the power to work on socio-economic problems of substance that fall within the purview of political authorities. In many cases, all they can do is point out the facts and suggest solutions.

To place the gang in its proper context, we will present in the next section a brief background summary on youth gangs. As we will see, the problem is not a recent one, to assess the changes, to put in perspective the concepts linked to gangs and to see whether alternatives would be possible in the present context.

2. BACKGROUND

Before the Second World War, Trasher is often quoted as an authority in scientific works. Indeed, during the 20's, the latter studied 1313 Gangs in the Chicago Area. He is a member of the Chicago School whose researchers became renowned for introducing a qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) method (See Trasher, 1928). The research carried out by Whyte (1943), also with the Chicago School, is also quoted. To find out more on these two authors, see the paper of Daniel Monti (1993) which refers to Trasher's work and Karen Joe's works on the qualitative method, the Chicago School and researcher Whyte (1995, 1993, 1993). At that time, gangs were viewed as relatively unaggressive socialized organizations.

During the fifties and sixties, a great deal of research can be found on this theme. Here again it is the Chicago School that deserves credit for developing the research through an intensive field work approach. In short, the researcher focuses on the players' viewpoint. With this purpose in mind, he interviews a number of them. His interviews with each of these individuals are documented and constitute his data base.

It was around this time (50's and 60's) that the media began to publish reports that established a link

between gangs and delinquency. The juvenile delinquency theme and the street gang theme were blended into a single theme.

Up until the 70's, research shows that gang members spent most of their time defending their turf, that their activities were of a non-criminal nature and that, in the few cases where crimes occurred, these were of a non-violent nature. At that time, gangs were still viewed as relatively unaggressive socializing organizations.

During the seventies, there was little interest in this theme. With the Vietnam War and protest movements going on, gangs got less media coverage and the sociologists' interest waned.

When the eighties came along, there was a renewed interest, albeit a slow one, which stemmed largely from the US Federal Government.

Indeed, in the late 80's, gang violence came to be viewed as a national problem. This can largely be attributed to alarming reports originating from Los Angeles on the problem. It is at this point that the perception of youth gangs began to change. Gangs were no longer viewed as unaggressive socializing organizations, but as a threat.

The perception of the researchers, who studied the subject, has significantly changed since the 20's, to such an extent that nowadays there are some who have no qualms about pointing out the seriousness of the problems of a public nature posed by contemporary gangs. However, although the proportion of acts of violence perpetrated by gangs can be extremely high in certain cities, schools, prisons and penitentiaries, we must not lose sight of the fact that, generally speaking, gang-related crime is still quite low in comparison with the overall crime rate, be it in the cities or in the penitentiary and/or school systems (Jankowski, B., 1994; Spergel, 1995).

Monti (1993) pointed out to what extent the dramatic increase in the number of gangs throughout the last decade took the people by surprise and posed a challenge for many. The lawmakers and

police forces (including Washington, DC) hastily prepared programs intended to "deal" with gangs. According to Monti (1993), they are much less concerned with the conditions under which such gangs emerged. The researchers, who had to find something useful to say, found themselves grappling with the theories of the 60's that were becoming obsolete.

With nothing more than the theories that had prevailed 20 years earlier at their disposal, the authors had to reassess their work in terms of the new context. This will be discussed in the next part dealing with the inherent problems of youth gang research. Certain Canadian data are available and reported in this section.

SUMMARY: In the 20's, as in the 50's and the 60's, there is a wealth of research on the youth gang theme. In the 60's, the theme is merged with that of juvenile delinquency. Following a quiet period in the 70's, the youth gang theme surfaced once again among American researchers in the 80's. This research stemmed largely from the federal government. It was at this point that youth gangs began to be viewed as a national problem, even though the youth crime rate is still considered quite low even today, as compared with the general crime rate (Spergel, 1995). Henceforth, for certain researchers, gangs are no longer perceived as unaggressive socialized organizations, but more as a threat. In any case, the researchers are as a whole faced with a new set of circumstances and the theories at their disposal are somewhat obsolete.

3. PROBLEMS CURRENTLY FACING THE RESEARCHERS

In the 90's, the researchers focusing on youth gangs are faced with various problems, including having to come up with a definition of what a youth gang is. The problems encountered impact, not only on the validity of the research, but also on the policies regarding youth gangs and, eventually, the implementation of programs. Judging by certain statements contained in research carried out by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, we can assume that the Canadian researchers share several problems with the American researchers. We shall list a few.

The first problem resides in the fact that there is no consensus on a definition of a gang, either among researchers, or among police forces, whether it has to do with terminology (gang, group, etc.) with respect to definition criteria or crime related to the phenomenon. Consequently, there are no reliable statistics at the national level regarding its extent, because the definition attributed to a gang varies from one police force to the next, from one city to the next and there is no agency responsible for collecting data nationally in the United States (Monti, 1993; Spergel, 1995).

In order to better illustrate the statistical complexity that the researchers have to deal with, let us look at the example of the statistical surveys of three American police forces: The Chicago Police Department keeps track of only crimes and offences pertaining to a specific gang activity. In Los Angeles, the Police Department takes into consideration any offence where the perpetrators or the victims are members of a gang. As for a Los Angeles suburban police department, the latter takes into account any criminal act committed by a group (Jankowski, B. 1992).

Consequently, there is presently no general definition of what a gang is. Now, according to the approach selected by those who are interested in youth gangs (definitions vary depending on the defining group), estimates of the number of youth gangs in a city are likely to vary and, by the same token, the manner in which a gang is defined depends on the manner the problem is understood. Is it a social problem or not? If so, how serious is it? (Jankowski, M.S., 1991; Jankowski, B. 1992; Moore, J. 1993; ICRDF, 1994; FCM, 1994; Spergel, 1995; Hébert & Al., 1997).

We should add that the appraisal of the seriousness and extent of the gangs widely varies depending on the occupation responsible for the data (i.e. researchers, police officers, journalists, social workers, media). There is little empirical research on gangs and that which exists merely reinforces stereotypes. You have to remember that it is difficult to carry out any empirical research without falling victim to a variety of traps as stated above (Moore, 1993).

Most of the researchers base their research on official police and legal data. Few ever come in direct contact with gangs. A few sociologists still resort to lengthy ethnographic immersion these days,

within gangs, including Michaël Sanchez Jankowski (1991) who observed 37 gangs in Boston, Los Angeles and New York with the assistance of a former member. Considering the fact that the police feels that it is concerned with crime, the definition of "gang" is related to crime.

Here is a sample definition provided by the Los Angeles Police Department:

> *A gang is a group of people who form an allegiance for a common purpose and engage in acts injurious to public health and public morals, who pervert or obstruct justice or the due administration of laws, or engage in (or have engaged in) criminal activity, <either individually or collectively>, and who create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community (Moore, 1993, p. 30).*

This definition reflects the effort being made to hold a gang responsible for indictable offences committed by individual members of a gang. In this case, the researcher must take into account the fact that the police data tend to confuse individuals and gangs. Let us now consider the definition submitted by sociologist James Short (1990):

> *...a group whose members meet together with some regularity, over time, on the basis of group-defined criteria of membership and group-determined organizational structure, usually with some sense of territoriality (Moore, 1993, p. 30).*

This definition makes no reference to the legality of behaviour, but merely describes youth behaviour without pointing out whether the behaviour is or is not "normal" or "abnormal" or even "illegal".

Closer to home, the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (1994) observed in a report that the knowledge that we presently have of youth gangs and their activities is, for the most part, based on journalistic reports. Furthermore, the Canadian authorities have a tendency to import both American definitions and policies, even though the experiences of both countries are quite different. Still, the situation in the US has had a great deal of influence on the way youth gangs are perceived in Canada.

Just as in the United States, the forming of gangs has been a concern to municipalities during the last few years. Certain of these gangs have been held responsible for crimes with violence, which stirred up the opinion of the public which reacted by demanding stiffer penalties from the lawmakers.

Canadian research on youth gangs is scarce. Furthermore, as in the United States, the researchers are faced with certain problems when it comes to available data. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, it is difficult to distinguish between crimes committed by youth gangs and crime in general, as uniform crime reporting (UCR) deals only with charges laid against an individual.

In order to identify among the population its social portrayals of violence among young people, the Canadian Federation of Municipalities asked its responding participants to describe the youth groups that they considered violent: *A range of groups was mentioned, from youth groups "hanging out" on street corners or in shopping centres to quarrelsome high school students hurling beer bottles after school dances, to highly organized criminal youth gangs* (FCM), 1994). In both Canada and the United States, there is no standard definition of the term youth gang and certain agencies even have their own definitions to suit their needs.

SUMMARY : In both United States and Canada, the material dealing with youth gangs points to the researchers' difficulty in gaining access to reliable statistical data and standard definitions, which is not surprising. Indeed, it can readily be seen that the people, who are interested in youth gangs, are not referring to the same thing and do not address the gang issue the same way. Each researcher appears to elaborate on a problem model that concerns him, according to his perception of youth gangs, his occupation and his interests. The response procedure and the policies implemented are based on this model.

4. ESTIMATED SIZE OF GANGS

Spergel (1995) admitted that, considering the fact that the available data are not too reliable, it is

difficult to estimate the number of gangs and gang members, be it within an institution, a city or a country. Under the circumstances, the author feels that a percentage estimate is the best way to estimate the extent of the phenomenon. It amounts to 5 to 10% of the adolescent population in the United States. There are more adequate data available regarding crimes of violence, particularly gang-related homicides that are on the way up in several American cities. However, he cautions and points out that, in spite of this increase, the fact remains that serious gang-related crimes still account for only a small percentage of serious crimes, whether violent or not. Gang-related crime is concentrated in certain neighbourhoods and ethnic or fringe groups. Where Spergel is concerned, the data are clear: extremely violent gang-related crimes are committed by youths aged 15 to 24 years, particularly by the oldest ones.

The Canadian Federation of Municipalities (1994) has focused, not only on the extent of violence among youth gangs, but also on the extent of violence among youths. In a certain way, this makes it possible to appreciate the reality of both.

Regarding the extent of violence among youths, the Federation document notes that, in this respect, the population's perception is confused. The official statistics must be interpreted more cautiously in spite of the fact that they reveal an "increase in violent crimes" committed by youths because... *the crime rate among Canadian youths has levelled off over the last five to ten years. In 1992, approximately 14% of youths charged by the police were charged with crimes of violence (Source: Uniform Crime Reporting, 1986-1992). However, nearly half of these crimes consisted of minor assaults such as slaps or blows with a fist* (CFM, 1994, p. 6).

Thus, the increase in violence crime statistics, in spite of a levelling off of crime among Canadian youths, is accounted for by a reduced tolerance and more frequent reports of violent crimes committed by youths, resulting in an increase of charges and convictions. The Federation even pointed out that: ..., *In fact, there may have been even as much, if not more, violence among youths in the past as there is today. Unfortunately, there are very few useful historical data in this regard. Consequently, it is difficult to see that there is a difference between the present levels of violence*

among youths today and those of 10, 15 or 20 or more years ago (CFM, 1994, p. 6)

Furthermore, the estimates on the extent of violence among youths have also been impacted upon by the legislative amendments pertaining to youths. *The 1984 Young Offenders Act* made the system more formal and legalistic. Today, more youths are being charged and incarcerated, and for longer terms, than when the *1908 Young Offenders Act* was in effect. Also, the youth services agencies no longer have the same reactions as they had before. According to the Federation, educational establishments and group homes demand more assistance for the police than they did before, in cases of violent behaviour. As for the population, it is more sensitive to questions of sexual assault and violence inflicted on children. Finally, the media contribute to the spreading of fear and concern with their alarming reports.

It is noted that youth gangs are more rampant in larger centres, although smaller municipalities have noted an increase in gang activities. Without a standard definition and without any means of systematically gathering data, it is difficult to estimate their extent. Police statements can be an asset because, in some cases, they contain statements on the activities of youth gangs; however, they are not part of the official data. The only means of estimating the extent of the phenomenon is to talk to people who look after this phenomenon (such as police officers and social workers) and to read the incident reports.

Within the framework of the project being carried out by the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (1994), it seems that there are few very well organized gangs in Canada. Youths, who hang out in gangs on street corners or in shopping centres, are generally not organized gangs. However, there are cases where the public considers them threatening, dangerous or criminal, even though they are merely hanging out together.

A recent document published by the Montreal Urban Community Police Department provides data on the Montreal situation.

To estimate the extent of the phenomenon, the report's authors (Hébert & Al, 1997) made reference, among other things, to the data of LeBlanc and Lanctôt (1997).

Based on their research, the latter estimated that: .... *13 to 20% of youths between the ages of 10 and 12 residing in slum districts claimed to have belonged to a fringe gang between 1988 and 1990. In the majority of these cases, their affiliation with the gang had lasted less than one year.* Furthermore, in the case of 12 to 18 year-old, the authors noted that: *With respect to 12 to 18 year-old, the proportion of those who had reported temporarily belonging to a fringe gang during the 70's was similar to that noted more recently among younger boys. In fact, it is noted that, in the case of boys, these figures amounted to 22% in the first half of adolescence and to 11% after this period, while among girls, these proportions varied, depending on these two age groups, between 9 and 15%. As for the adolescent boys and girls in the same age group who were judicialized, the noted percentages were, in this case, clearly higher. It turns out that approximately two thirds of them have indicated that they had belonged to a fringe gang, both during the 70's and 20 years later. However, just as the previous groups, it is noted that the length of affiliation was in one of every two cases temporary and that this applied more to the first part of adolescent years.* (Hébert & Al, 1997, p. 5-6).

Hébert & Al. (1997) found that the data provided by LeBlanc and Lanctôt ... *appeared to show that, from a statistical standpoint, the percentages of youths stating that they belonged to a gang were, by and large, higher than the ones noted in the United States (p. 6)* Hébert & Al. also make reference to the data supplied by Blondin (1993), the facts being provided by the Antigang Section of the Montreal Urban Community Police Department. These data are descriptive and do not provide any details on the extent of the phenomenon: reference is made to the make-up of gangs, their age (14-25 years), their cultural affiliation, the site of their activities. It is also noted that certain gangs are relatively organized and that they use sophisticated means (forged papers and firearms), that Asian gangs have their roots in the United States and that ...*on the whole, Montreal gangs are involved in highly varied offensive or criminal activities resorting, in some cases, to extreme violence: rumbles, settlements of accounts, murders and attempted murders, robberies, drug and arms trafficking,*

prostitution, thefts and fencing, BETs, etc. Reference is also made to the presence of extreme right groups such as the *Klu Klux Klan* and the *Skinheads*" (Hébert & Al., 1997, p. 6).

A report from the Metro Toronto Police (1992) identified 335 youth gangs, 105 of which were involved in various criminal activities between 1991 and 1992. In the Vancouver Area, according to a report from Jackson (1994), few youths were seriously involved in gangs. There were several youths who were a nuisance, but they were not criminals. As in the previous cases, it is practically impossible for the researchers to distinguish the indictable offences committed by gangs from those committed by individuals and to make the required correlations.

SUMMARY: In the United States, according to Spergel (1995), youth gangs make up 5 to 10% of the adolescent population. In spite of a hike in gang-related serious crimes, in several American cities, the serious crimes account for only a small percentage of all serious crimes, whether violent or not. In Canada, according to the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, the official statistics point to an increase in violent crimes. Furthermore, the crime rate among youths has levelled off during the last five to ten years and the Federation urges us to exercise caution when interpreting these statistics. Indeed, this increase in violent crimes among young people can be accounted for by the different definitions of violence, by a lower tolerance, by more frequent statements and by the *Young Offenders Act.* The Federation even goes as far as to say that there was more violence in the past than there is now and finally it estimates that there are few well organized gangs in Canada.

As for Montreal, Hébert & Al (1997) provide descriptive data on the members making up the gangs, rather than an estimate of the number of young gang members. Toronto, for its part, has reportedly identified 335 youth gangs and in Vancouver it is estimated that few youths are seriously involved in gangs.

Apart from the random data that researchers have to contend with, there were prior to these a set of stereotypes on youth gangs that helped define in various ways youth gangs. These are the object of the next section.

5. GANGS AND STEREOTYPES

According to Moore (1993), there is a consensus among the authors who claim that gangs have been in existence throughout the entire History of America and that they have been the cause of public disturbances. The problem is that, whenever historians attempt to put together this history of city gangs, there are very facts available to them.

As in the case of other social groups, the social portrayals that we have of gangs are, in many cases, built around stereotypes. Popular bias is galvanized and amplified by periodic surges of fear concerning the criminal behaviours of certain youths acting in groups. They are referred to as crime waves. The name given to the link between stereotype and crime wave is "moral panic". "Moral panic" is built on pre-existing cleavages in our society, be they class or race-related. In the case of gangs, it is built on, among other things, fears and ignorance of what is going on in the old neighbourhoods or slums, which reinforces, on the one hand, the public's conviction that their morale is better and, on the other hand, their fear that their morale is being threatened. It is obvious that moral panic is particularly focused on youths, precisely because youths, who happen to be the adults of tomorrow, pose a challenge regarding the maintenance of their elders' values. As Moore (1993) stated, if their socialization fails, the future of the community could be at stake.

What are these stereotypes and to what extent do they make it difficult to understand gangs and their members?

5.1 A Few Recurring Stereotypes

There are no variations in gang behaviour and structure: *"a gang is a gang is a gang"* (Moore, 1993, p. 28). According to Moore, if the media ever find a new behaviour in a gang, they assume that all gangs act the same way. They are all bad and all in the same way. If it were ever proven beyond doubt that a particular gang does not *deal* in crack, it would be assumed that it is only a matter of time, that they will get into it sooner or later.

Another stereotype: all gangs are considered potentially high risk and can develop the worst of behaviours. There are no variations from one gang to the next and they will inevitably become more of a threat.

- All gangs are the same, and nothing good ever comes out of a gang. Emphasis is placed on criminal behaviour and no one knows what binds a gang to other groups of youths and to the community in a more conventional manner (Horowitz, 1990: Moore, 1993). Consequently, they are viewed as a police problem.

- Individual gang members are confused with a gang as such (Moore, 1993; Cummings, J., 1993; Jankowski, M.S., 1991), as the earlier definition from the Los Angeles Police Department clearly shows.

- Jankowski (1991) noted that gang members were viewed as the lowest rung of society, with no intelligence and no sense of initiative. This viewpoint is simply irrelevant, according to the author. The majority of members are intelligent and able to develop and carry out creative undertakings. It is difficult to make out these traits, largely because, whenever social agents run into them, it is generally in circumstances where they are on their guard and on the defensive, which conceals their abilities. Furthermore, considering that they are often involved in activities that society has labelled as illegal or illegitimate, social agents and society are reluctant to see them as we see the brightest members of our society who abide by the law.

- Another stereotype is to assume that gang members are more prone to psychiatric problems (Jankowski, M.S., 1991). There may certainly be some members who are; however, on a prorated basis, their number is much lower than that of the population in general, precisely because gangs screen their members. Indeed, anything that is unpredictable is likely to cause the gang problems. The members' aggressiveness can be further accounted for by the fact that they grew up in a socioeconomic environment that breeds aggressiveness and violence. This aggressiveness in dealing with people is not necessarily pathological; rather it is the appropriate behaviour in an environment

in which the socio-economic aspect is pathological, according to Jankowski (1991).

- The belief that they are lazy, without any initiative and that they are not willing to work to earn a living is another common stereotype. Certain members do have these traits. However, the vast majority are energetic and want to acquire the same things that the majority of citizens want. It is precisely because they want the good life that they ponder the opportunities that would allow them to achieve it. They have what Weber calls *the spirit of capitalism* (Jankowski, 1991).

- There is also a feeling that gang members are opposed to social programs aimed at altering their association with their gangs and criminal activities. Actually, they are not opposed to social programs in general, only to those that are aimed at controlling their behaviour, providing them with low-level skills and removing them from competition, from business undertakings. In short, they are against programs that control their behaviour without giving them anything in return.

All these stereotypes put together create a gap between youth gang members and other youths. In this regard, M.S. Jankowski (1991) stated that: *Maintaining the contrast between the "deviant" gang member and the "normal" young adult supports the existing social system and the ideology of inequality that justifies it (Jankowski, 1991, p. 312).*

5.2 Violence and Drugs: an Ill-Defined Relationship

One type of violence that several gangs share is that of gang wars (Moore, 1993). As for the proportions of acts of violence connected to gang involvement in drug trafficking, they appear to be much lower than we would be led to believe as a result of the alarming statements of institutional observers of these cities, according to Jankowski, B. (1992).

An investigation carried out by Skolnick in 1990, among 80 individuals (inmates, heads of penitentiary establishments, police forces and judicial services) reveals that, just because gang members are involved in drug-selling, this does not necessarily mean that they must be necessarily

linked with the phenomenon. Most gangs are not formed for the purpose of trafficking; it is just that the fact that a gang provides a certain level of organization makes this activity easier.

Also, Fagan (1988) found similar proportions of violent and non-violent gangs among those that trafficked and those that were not involved in the distribution of drugs. In Lost Angeles, the police department's estimate reveals that 10% of member homicides are directly related to drug trafficking. The Chicago Police Department, for its part, has revealed that 2 of every 182 homicides, 3 of every 363 thefts and 18 of every 4052 cases of assault could be blamed on gangs and connected to drug trafficking. The claims are not based on specific figures and, in some cases, contradict the figures that are available.

Spergel (1995) also noted that the media and the police wrongly linked gangs, drug trafficking and violence. While there was an increase in drug use and trafficking as well as greater involvement in violent crimes by gang members, the link between these facts has not necessarily been established and the facts are, in many cases, quite distinct. Peaceful gangs are, traditionally, not an effective and suitable base for drug distribution, in spite of the fact that individual gang members and sub-groups may actually be involved in drug trafficking. There is nothing to indicate that a large increase in drug trafficking can significantly be attributed to street gang activities or to certain individuals only The escalation in gang violence and the escalation in violence in drug trafficking by non-members are, largely, two different things. However, there could be a link between drug trafficking and certain gang members who become the pushers of adult criminal organizations.

5.3 Gang Members: Who Are They? Where Are They?

According to Spergel (1995), gangs surface in local communities that are, in some cases, disorganized and/or impoverished. The process inciting individuals to join gangs arises out of an interaction between inadequate parenting and community weakness. However, even good parents are unable to prevent their youths from ever joining a gang, particularly in low income neighbourhoods where social problems are rampant.

Still, according to Spergel, gang members are typically affected in their schooling or drop out of school. The researchers suggest that the emergence of gangs stems as much from dropping out of school as from problems and pressure at home. Contributing school variables include the type of teaching body, school size, available resources, the manner in which a school is being managed and the psycho-social atmosphere.

According to Spergel (1995), age, sex, culture, the economy and structure of the community impact on the nature and development of gang-related problems. In the largest communities, gangs are largely made up of adolescent males and young adults. A gang can be distinguished based on such factors as race, ethnic group, and culture and, in many cases, an underprivileged environment. Besides poverty, social disorganization, particularly in the case of mobile changing populations, provides an ideal breeding ground for the development of a gang sub-culture. The manner in which the factors of poverty and criminal activities, the family and a disorganized environment combine with race and ethnic cultural traditions to lay the foundations for certain gang behaviour models. Spergel also feels that young people join a gang for various reasons such as status, money, power, the "high" that this gives them and new experiences, particularly under conditions of social deprivation or when the community is unstable.

Contrary to Spergel, Jankowski (1991) stated that it would be narrow-minded to believe that being fatherless, wanting to have fun or having been intimidated by a gang are the reasons motivating a young person to join a gang. Judging by the interviews conducted by Jankowski with gang members, the reason most often given to justify their decision to join a gang is that it seemed like the best choice at the time.

America, says Jankowski, is very proud to claim that it is the bastion of individualism and it produced a pure form of its own individualism: *Ironically, in the defiant individualist gang member, American society has found it difficult to control its own creation (Jankowski, 1991, p. 313).*

As for Quebec youths, it would appear on the basis of the data supplied by Hébert et Al. (1997) that they share several common traits with American youths, i.e. with the majority being males originating from cultural communities.

According to Monti (1993), it is wrong to believe that gangs live only in slums. They can just as well be found in good neighbourhoods, among the middle class and in suburbs. By and large, researchers did not find or did not attempt to find gangs elsewhere than in *slums: When gangs are found, or thought to be found implies much about the organization, behaviors and thinking of the gangs and the community of which they are part. Gangs remain a metaphor for all that is seductive and dangerous about ethnic groups and the slums they inhabit (Monti, 1993, p. 9).*

Like all the other authors, he sees that the majority of gang members are adolescents, but remain gang members for a longer time. He accounts for this by their inability to take on more conventional adult roles and to acquire jobs in the mainstream or official economy. And, the only major change, according to Monti (1993), with respect to gang membership, has to do with girls who have initiated their own gangs.

As for the gang, as an organization, Cummings and Monti (1993) realize that more gangs appear to be more involved in serious and lucrative criminal activities, to be more aggressive, mobile and openly hostile to the community institutions and the individuals living around them than they were a few years ago. In the next section, we will look at the gang as an organization.

SUMMARY: As in the case of other social groups, youth gangs are exposed to prejudice. The social portrayals that we have of youth gang members and gangs are, for the most part, based on stereotypes. These stereotypes have to do with the motives that lead young people to join a gang, the make-up of a gang (the quality of its members), the behaviour of a gang, their assumed crime rate and the extent of their dangerousness. The media are largely responsible for these stereotypes. Furthermore, these stereotypes lead society to view youth gangs as being different from other youths, to establish links that are not always relevant between them and certain types of crime (violence and

drugs) or certain cultural groups and to treat them differently.

At this point, what is important to bear in mind, according to Monti (1993), is that gang members are for the most part, adolescent males, that they remain gang members for a longer time, because of the economic situation, and that girls have begun to form their own gangs.

6. THE GANG AS AN ORGANIZATION

Several authors map out a typology of gangs undoubtedly for the purpose of sorting out the characteristics of this form of organization to be able to control it better. This is the topic of section 6.1. Furthermore, few authors have studied gangs as organizations by approaching these from within. This is the topic of section 6.2 for which most of the data was supplied by M.S. Jankowski (1991) who used an ethnomethodological approach.

6.1 General Typology

6.1.1 Turf

The notion of turf is a comprehensive concept of gangs. In fact, turf and social identity are as one. Graffiti are used to stake out and claim their rights to the selected turf or territory. The rights can be broken down into 3 categories:

- belonging as such: control over points of entry and exit
- occupation: the gang tolerates other gangs on certain conditions
- monopoly over criminal activities.

With respect to swarming, opinions differ from one researcher to the next. Hagerdon (1990) shows, for example, that gangs do not spread from one city to the next, but arise spontaneously whenever

conditions are ideal.

In cities where gangs have been entrenched for a long time, identification with turf is of less importance. The wearing of colours, gesture recognition and names are less significant.

6.1.2 Member Typology

Police officers had a great deal to do with this way of addressing the themes.

1. First of all, the hard core members: these youths look after the daily operations of the gang. They remain in close contact with each other. They are in charge of recruiting and are more deeply involved in criminal activities than casual members. They make up approximately 10 to 15% of the gang.

2. The fringe associates are not as present in a gang. However, they are given certain specific duties that have to do with confidential access to information on opposing gangs.

3. The leaders are the preferred targets of police officers. Certain gangs use formal designations such as: King, Prince, Don, *Chief.*

6.1.3 Degree of Cohesion

Opinions are also divided on this topic. In Trasher's time, the gangs were poorly organized and rather unstable. 30 years later, Klein also noted the uncohesive nature of gangs, that is to say their unstable memberships. However, this opinion is not shared by Franklin Elder (1996) and Jankowski (1991) who, on the basis of a national study, claimed that gangs were more than uncohesive entities made up of delinquents, that they were organized entities which, in some cases, had stable members for average periods of 4 and one half years.

Regarding the diffuse or conventional aspect of a gang, that is sometimes referred to in writings, Monti (1993) was of the view that: *There was no clear line distinguishing diffuse from solidified*

gangs or conventional from criminal gangs in the 1920's, and that remains true today (Monti, 1993, p. 10). A gang is not as large as a corporation, not as regimented are the army; however, it is organized to survive and develop, as much as possible, in an inhospitable environment, just as any group does in a more conventional environment. As several people have observed, a gang often serves as an alternate means of support as a substitute for the family for members coming from dysfunctional families (Monti, 1993; Spergel, 1995). Spergel (1995) adds that the overwhelming need for status and its manifestation in the context of a group stems largely from a lack of resources and the weakness of internal and external control of the group.

6.1.4. Size

Researchers have never reached a consensus on what should be included when attempting to quantify the size of a gang (the hard core members only or with the casual members, or even the wannabes). Size is reportedly variable. It appears to become more important in the case of a gang turf war than in a time of peace.

6.2 Another way of Looking at an Organization

According to Jankowski (1991), researchers have failed in articulating variations of types of organization used by the gangs and their levels of sophistication.

The fact that a gang has not been understood as an organization has had a serious impact on the comprehension of a gang. As an organization, the primary objective of a gang is survival. This has an influence on the recruiting of member, i.e. not letting just anyone in and not taking in too many members, because this can adversely affect the internal control of a group. This also impacts on the role of each, the interaction between the members and future recruiting.

The most subtle aspects of the organization of a gang have to do with both each member's freedom

and the existence of cohesion. These are conditions of prime importance to the existence of a gang and its survival. The members must be free to come and go as they please, leaving outsiders with the impression that gangs are weak organizations. In a case, for example, where physical intimidation is used to hold on to a member, a gang will tend to disintegrate and eventually disappear.

Spergel (1995) stated that was little research that indicated why certain gangs disappeared or why a member left. Most studies suggest that members leave when they have achieved a certain maturity. They reach a certain point in their social apprenticeship when they realize that there can be a less stressful alternative, another means of fulfilling their social and economic needs. A religious conversion will in some cases facilitate their departure, particularly when they have ties with a violent gang. Girls, who are less strongly bonded to a gang, are inclined to leave the gang more often than boys do. They appear to play a key role when it is a question of curbing gang violence or leaving a gang.

Also on the subject of members leaving a gang, Jankowski (1991) noted that, when a member left a gang, in certain cases, he was lucky and had enough money to live comfortably for a while. In certain cases, the member gravitated to another gang which managed an "illegal" activity and had a good income. Certain members died early as a result of an *overdose*, a confrontation or a medical problem. As one can see, the situations are complex and leave little room for generalizations.

However, most drop out and wind up assuming the socio-economic position of their parents by accepting to take jobs they refuted. Ironically, they will have grown while struggling with hardships and deprivation and the fear of death that come with this type of life and find themselves facing a social death that comes with low level jobs, the fate of their parents and the neighbourhood as a whole.

The maintenance of a gang depends on various factors that are, generally speaking, the ability to withstand internal and external pressure. Certain gangs disintegrate because of infighting or pressure

from the authorities. Certain are taken over by a more powerful gang (just as in the business world). What most people have yet to understand, according to Jankowski (1991), is that a gang has its own dynamics as an organization.

As for the sophistication of gangs, according to certain authors, the gangs of today are more sophisticated than before, mainly because this is a by-product of the economic structure (Jankowski, M.S., 1991).

SUMMARY: The study of a gang as an organization is twofold. In the first case, the researchers rely on typology. By selecting certain characteristics, they feel that they are able to exorcize more control over gangs. In the second case, the researchers approach the gang from within. This is the case with Michaël S. Jankowski (1991) who considers that, if we wish to understand gang behaviour and persistence, we must look after a gang's ability to organize, to regenerate itself, and not neglect its degree of sophistication. The policies that could apply mainly to individual members apparently have little impact on the gang itself. Only the policies affecting both the individual and the organizational skills of a gang could begin to change things with respect to the gang and its persistence.

7. THE GANG'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS COMMUNITY

The authors give the impression that a gang is constantly isolated from the community (Monti, 1993). In this regard, Whyte (1943), Moore (1993) and Vigil (1993) have tried to illustrate how a gang is part of a community on a day-to-day basis. Beyond the criminal activities, there are other conventional activities that solidify the bonds between the members of a gang but also establish an identity with people outside the gang. This point has not been followed up in the works that follow Trasher's. In this case, the gangs took part in the so-called underground economies of their communities. Most of the researchers have analysed a gang outside the social context by dwelling on its structure and on the behaviour of the members. Yet, it would appear that the relationship between certain gangs and their communities has evolved over the decades. Spergel states, for

example, that a systematic relationship sometimes develops between gangs and politicians. Consequently, a gang can come to be recognized as an instrument of influence and power and can obtain resources and benefits on the part of politicians in exchange for their influence in getting votes, by intimidating the citizens (Spergel, 1995).

Certain individuals claim that, when the relations between a gang and the conventional institutions of its community become strained the gang is more inclined to attack the citizens and to exploit the community agencies (Monti, 1993).

As for Jankowski (1991), he did some research on the bonds between the gangs and their communities. While it may not be clear that similar situations are discussed in Canadian research, it is interesting to learn about Jankowski's findings regarding the ambivalence of the inhabitants of low income communities and their relationships with gangs.

According to Jankowski (1991), the members of low income communities are ambivalent, first of all, because they are the children of their places of residence. Consequently, they do not want their children to be beaten up in fights but, on the other hand, they do not want them to be put in jail either.

Also, gangs are often their best protection against aggressors. They may not always like gang violence, but they appreciate their protection. They relate to the gangs because they, themselves, or members of their families were once members of a gang. Even though they disapprove certain of their forms of behaviour, gang members are still a reflection of themselves. They are reluctant to do away with gangs, because they have always existed. They have become social institutions of the community. Just as a baseball league, gangs are a phase of their development on the way to adulthood. Furthermore, if the authorities do not consider the gang to be a problem, their community will not receive any attention and any resource. Finally, they are looking after their own interests. When they lose control at the hands of the gangs, they tend to approve the authorities. When, on the other hand, the authorities make them feel that they are losing control of their community, they turn

to the gangs (Jankowski, 1991).

Let us now look at the socio-economic impact of the community in which gangs are formed. The general consensus of the authors is that, when the economy of a community is not based on jobs and wages, other types of economies begin to take hold. This is the fundamental argument of Wilson when he talks about the emergence of an *underclass*. Social assistance, bartering, informal economies and illegal economies become substitutes, simply because people have to find a means of subsistence. The youths growing up in such communities have little to expect from the future (Jankowski, 1991; Jankowski, 1992; Jackson, 1993; Moore, 1993; Monti, 1993; Spergel, 1993; Spergel, 1995; Franklin Elder, 1996).

According to Joan Moore (1993), it is clear that any research on gangs has to take into account the economic factor (Moore, Joan, 1993). Franklin Elder (1996) adds that, when a gang is viewed by the young people as the only alternative to make up for their lack of economic opportunities and when, furthermore, they believe that society is not interested in them, in what is happening to them, we can expect that several youths will be vulnerable to recruiting and socializing on the part of the gang.

As for Jackson (1993), the traditional manner of defining a gang as being a criminal justice problem could not and never worked in this *underclass* environment. One of the basic reasons why a youth remains longer in a gang is the growth of this underclass of society. According to him, any policies of gang elimination or reduction are doomed to fail because, in certain communities, young people have no other alternatives. And yet, according to Spergel and Curry (1993), repression is the most widespread method at present (Jackson, 1993).

SUMMARY: This theme had been neglected since Trasher. Yet, it turns out to be an important aspect of the study of youth gangs. Indeed, according to Spergel (1995), it seems that the relationships between a gang and its community evolves over the decades. Whenever the relations between a gang, its community and the latter's conventional institutions are strained, the gang is

more inclined to exploit the agencies of its community. It would appear also, according to Jankowski (1991) that ambiguous ties develop between the members of a low income community and a gang originating in this community because of the close bonds uniting them.

Furthermore, the socio-economic aspect of the community in which a gang is formed must necessarily be taken into account while doing research on the matter. Indeed, in a low income community where there is little concern for the fate of young people, an adolescent can come to view a gang as his only alternative. And, as Jackson (1993) points out, any policies of gang elimination or reduction are doomed to fail.

8. POLICIES REGARDING GANGS

The policies implemented to fight gangs.

8.1 Historical Evolution

During the fifties and the sixties, the response to gangs was more of a preventive nature. Numerous social programs were being set up (street workers - psycho-social assistance) but these were rather ineffective.

The objective was to prevent youth from joining gangs and/or to bring back the leaders by steering them towards social action. These programs have not been systematically assessed. The researchers have particularly highlighted the failures and weaknesses. According to Klein (1971), the priority objectives were unclear: did they wish to deal with cases on an individual basis by providing resources and jobs? Did they wish to work on changing the young people's values? Did they wish to prevent gang wars? Did they wish to prevent delinquency? He concluded that, the elaboration of these programs did more to create jobs for social workers than it did to cut down on delinquency. Furthermore, it was shown that a good relationship between youth and their educators (the street

workers) could go hand in hand with the maintenance of criminal behaviours.

During the seventies, the Philadelphia program combined two strategies, i.e. mobilizing the community and creating a crisis network pooling together the institutions tasked with deterrence and repression. During that era, summits were created between gangs, police forces and social workers. The experiment resulted in a 60-day truce regarding gang wars. The City registered a decrease in gang conflicts. However, without this program, New York has also registered a decrease in gang conflicts. Therefore, you have to wonder about the actual effectiveness of this sort of programs.

During the seventies and eighties, repression strategies prevailed. In spite of the priority given to these by several cities, no assessments have been made.

8.2. The Five Existing Strategies

An investigation carried out by the *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention* (1987) among 250 officials from the police, the justice system, social workers and associations of 45 American cities has rounded up five strategies that we will look at.

1. The repressive strategy comprising intelligence work, peremptory questioning and incarceration. Used in 44% of the cases

2. The strategy of social response rests on a social treatment of youths and their families taken in by the social services. This strategy is used in 31.5% of the cases.

3. The strategy of increased social integration opportunities through the development of education, training and jobs. This strategy is used in 5% of the cases.

4. The strategy of community mobilization with the implementation of coordinated programs among institutions representing the penal system and the "community" organizations (population relief associations, for ex.). this strategy is used in 9% of the cases.

5. The strategy of *organizational development* or "organizational change" within the agencies in charge of the problem depends on the creation of special gang-fighting units within the

police forces, the specialized prosecution and probation systems and specific responses against hard core members. In many cases, this strategy is used to support the previous ones. This strategy is used in 11% of the cases.

The following section contains a critical assessment by various authors of certain of these approaches.

8.3 Response Strategies: a Critical Approach

According to Daniel Monti (1993), the solutions proposed for fighting gangs are twofold. The first one consists in leaving the gang exposed to the community, to the conventional world and to its influences. This is socialization. The task is performed by street workers. The second one, which is more aggressive, consists in removing the gang from the community and in trying to mobilize the community against the gang. This is the most popular method.

According to the author, one of the things that has added impetus to gang-related problems is not taking action when the gang surfaces and overreacting when the problems become too obvious to be ignored. It must also be borne in mind that conflicts with outsiders reinforce the gang's identity and leads the gang to act aggressively against their enemies, be they real or imaginary. Furthermore, there is a big difference between the complaints of the residents of the neighbourhoods in which there are gangs and the modest steps taken to solve the problem.

Indeed, considering that the gangs are acting in specific neighbourhoods, the residents of the neighbourhoods that are not visited by the gangs do not feel concerned. This may well account for the lack of cooperation between the citizens of a city and for inaction against gangs.

Jankowski (1991) also points out that the development and implementation of policies are not the result of strong public demand, because the gangs are in a geographical space that does not affect the middle and affluent classes. There a general apathy on the part of the public. When the gangs

invade the territory of these classes, the latter demand action. However, this seldom happens and the complaints are not loud enough to initiate a process that will bring about a highly extensive policy.

Also, Monti (1993) points out that control over gangs has always ben a priority for those who wanted to do something about these, i.e. legislation, boot camps for young offenders, forbiddance to wear colours and certain clothes in schools. The measures consist of custody and repression; however, very little is done in a constructive sense, such as restructuring local communities, providing young people with economic and social alternatives to gang activities, in order to solve gang-related problems.

According to Jankowski (1991), most of the social policies have been intended to fight gangs and have had minimal impact. The author singles out three reasons. First, there is the fact that, on the one hand, everyone appears to put the finger on poverty and the lack of opportunities as being at the root of gangs, but no one has taken a serious look at these two problems. The sporadic efforts to create jobs have not succeeded in solving the underlying problems. They are carried out only for a small number whose jobs do not lead anywhere or these jobs turn out to be just like those of their parents, i.e. exactly the sort of jobs that they attempting to avoid. Not knowing what to do or not having the will required to improve the urban poverty situation, those who are behind the policies focus on stiffening the laws and/or prolonging sentences. The repressive and punitive strategy has not had too much success in curbing gang activity. There are two reasons, i.e. the repressive strategy destroys relationships over time between the gang members and the various government levels and, secondly, lengthy jail sentences do not impact in any way on the persistence of gangs, because the members resurrect the gang in jail (Spergel, 1995).

Concerning the jail sentences, Spergel (1995) noted that, over the last decades, the gang members who were put in jail had a tendency to create new gangs, to organize themselves and to become criminals. The gang members in jail today maintains contact with their peers on the outside. Consequently, it cannot be assumed for certain that imprisonment is a deterrent and puts the brakes

on the gang's activities. Instead, jails are merely an extension of socially disorganized communities. Jails solidify the gang's structure and the criminal process, particularly when alternate social structures and legitimate opportunities are not sufficiently available outside prison.

However, it is the decision-makers who are behind the policies and, according to Jankowski (1991), those who map out the repressive policies feel that, by trying to resolve the gang problem this way, they are not creating bigger problems for society. However, they are blocking efforts to seek other alternatives, other programs. For fear of making mistakes by innovating, they ignore the non-repressive policies, feeling that the alternatives are unpredictable.

Police officers are tasked with enforcing these policies. Yet, the police's reactions can add impetus to the antisocial tendencies of the gang members or some of them (Hagedorn, 1988; Monti, 1993; Jackson, 1993; Spergel, 1995). The research done by Cummings and Monti (1993) leads them to conclude, for example, that if there ever was something that they had learned about gangs, it was the great satisfaction and emulation that they derived from their rumbles with real or imaginary enemies. Consequently, chances are that any policy based on the imprisonment of members and/or the elimination of gangs will promote rather than deter their activities.

Spergel (1995) maintains that a strict *lock-em-up* approach appears to be the most commonly used one, particularly in large cities that are experiencing gang problems. The police forces of certain California cities, for example, have been operating on the basis of a [illegible] anti-gang crusade, by using programs with such names as *Crash, Get and Smash.* Large specialized and centralized antigang units have been set up in large cities. Prior to the reorganization of the Chicago Police Force, the police anti-gang unit was made up of 500 officers. It was the force's largest unit.

Repression is based on the assumption that most street gangs are criminal associations that must be tackled by a special unit tasked with identifying and prosecuting them. This special unit also develops strategies to target them. Police officials have argued and shown that the collection of data via various agencies of the justice system has made it more effective to remove gang members from

the street, to take them quickly to court and to send them to jail. However, the gang problem is lingering, worsening and spreading. Furthermore, several constitutional issues have been raised concerning the fact of targeting gangs, without paying enough attention to the commission of crimes by gang members. Also, judging by the studies made, there is little evidence that the repression of gangs by specialized units has been effective in alleviating gang problems, be it in small or large cities.

As for the legislation, Jackson (1993), who studied the California laws and their impact on gangs, considers that these laws peaked with the enactment of the *Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act of 1988.* According to the author, this Act coincides with the birth of negative portrayals of gangs, including drugs and violence. The combined negative social images have impressed the population and led to strong reactions on the part of the public and the legislators and these are much stronger than they would have been had each problem been given separate consideration. In short, the new laws were enacted in response to the definition and social portrayals of a gang provided by the police forces, the media and other pressure groups. The laws made it possible to focus on the underprivileged, on male youths and minorities belonging to gangs.

In short, the problem has subsisted. The old solutions, such as denying the existence of the problem or placing responsibility for the problem on the shoulders of the police and the attorneys, or masking the problem by sending the leaders to jail did not make it disappear.

For some people, the solution lies in community mobilization. This approach also has its limits. Spergel, one of the great boosters of the community approach and community mobilization has provided a critical assessment of this approach. According to Spergel (1995), the Health and Social Services Department programs appear to represent a step forward in effectively pooling together the efforts of various agencies to fight youth gang problems in various local communities. These programs have raised some questions in the author's mind; no one knows whether much will be learned from the efforts accomplished. So far, it has not been clearly established that these programs are well managed and assessed. Good management and a sound assessment would make

it possible to find out what is working and what is not working. There is a lack of coordination among the various government authorities (i.e. Manpower, Education, Health and Social Services, Urban Planning). The lack of cooperation does not make it possible to reach a common understanding of the problem and the implementation of youth gang reduction and prevention programs. Even though the idea of an inter-relationship between community mobilization and the various government authorities appears to be the most logical one and a priority in reducing the number of youth gangs, the tradition of the various government authorities that leads them to act independently and in their own self interests coupled with the operation of the political structures that have a tendency to fragment power are an impediment to the integration of the various programs and institutions.

According to Spergel (1995), the American federal policies continue to be the outcome of a lack of understanding of the complexity of relationships between youth gangs and broader problems such as poverty, housing, racial suppression policy, immigration, population movements, a lack of educational and training opportunities, a shortage of jobs, particularly among the older adolescents of minority groups. These policies are also the result of a lack of interest in the local communities of underprivileged areas.

In the next section, we will deal with the factors that will make it easier to achieve success with youth gangs and their members.

8.4. Response Strategies: the Best Ingredients for Success.

According to Spergel (1995), it is preferable to better define a gang, while focussing on the causes of incidents rather than on the members, when the time comes to describe what is at the heart of the issue and to target more effectively. Emphasis must be placed on mobilizing the community and creating opportunities for youths, particularly when the gang subsists. It is not a question of casting aside the repression and social response strategy, it is a question of giving priority to mobilizing the community and to creating opportunities, which does not mean that other strategies cannot be

implemented.

Franklin Elder (1986), for his part, states that a distinction must be made between strategies that are intended for individuals and those that are aimed at the organization of the group, since the social behaviour of an individual differs from his individual behaviour. The prevention and response efforts must not be restricted to the individual in solving problems pertaining to a group.

Furthermore, according to Joe (1993), major differences in the development of a gang, its activities and its organization exist depending on whether the gang is made up of young Asians, blacks, Hispanics or whites. As it turns out, a good knowledge of the cultural community makes it possible to implement the right social policies.

Those who set up the public policies must take into account the potentially negative consequences that can arise as a result of official reactions, i.e. those of the police, when it comes to gangs. Money spent on legislation and correctional services could be better invested in the communities. It would be a start. (Jackson, 1993). In this regard, Spergel (1995) adds that an approach that is more geared towards cooperation between the police, the public and the community agencies appears to be surfacing. Such an approach makes it possible to assume that the local community groups and agencies, as well as the gangs themselves, are responsible for contributing and cooperating in keeping a lid on gang violence and criminal behaviour. More realistic objectives aimed at reducing gang violence rather than on naively reducing gangs are showing promise.

In using this approach, the police is emphasizing both repression and social response, learning to communicate with the youths in a spirit of respect, acceptance and in such a manner that the youths can see that they are interested in them, while maintaining a certain control.

Short (1990) goes even further. He sees the police as being in an advantageous situation when it comes to identifying problems, working in cooperation with agencies and proposing solutions. The police officers' role could be drastically changed by focussing less on crime and more on

strengthening and lending support to the community in its attempts to develop itself. If the police could focus on mediation, community agencies, research methods and an interpretation of the research done, both the police and the community would undergo a complete change. The police could become a source of support for rather than an enemy to the community, as is often the case in crime-ridden neighbourhoods. The police officers would become a resource for the community, working with the residents to solve problems, particularly those of young people. The purpose is to promote the social capital throughout a functional community, a community in which family life, work, religion, education, the police and the other institutions are a reflection of common values.

This social capital concept is drawn from a study carried out by Coleman and Hoffer (1987) who have this to say about social capital: A functional community provides opportunities for young people but does not provide them with any social capital, i.e. an intangible but genuine need for interpersonal relationships. Short considers that exchanges between generations within the communities result from structural changes in the family and the influence of the media. We must add to this all the changes related to the economy. The challenges posed by these changes surface at several levels. Emphasis should be placed on promoting positive relations between the generations that would then become the cornerstone of a functional community and would make it possible to create a social capital. Recent innovations in crime prevention and rehabilitation through a community approach are promising. Certain of these programs create "functional extended families", while others place emphasis on the entire community. The goal is the same, i.e. to create a community of values within which institutions and programs provide each other with mutual support.

The author concludes by describing a project set up in Chicago and known as the *Beethoven Project (Center for Successful Child Development in Chicago).* It affects approximately 20,000 persons, 90% of which are blacks, with three quarters of the heads of families being women.

In this context, gangs are no longer viewed by the residents as a threat to their individual selves and their property. The community becomes a form of support for gangs. The community has

incorporated gangs rather than vice-versa. Thus, the community and the gangs have become more acceptable to each other. This type of program places emphasis on participation and local control rather than on professional *leadership*. The budgets are looked after by the public sector and the private sector. There are several goals; however, job creation and youth recreational activities are the two priorities. Certain have created manufactured good, distribution and service businesses. Most are intended for both youths who have been referred to adolescent court or who have served time and youths who have not yet been integrated into the criminal justice system.

The project seeks to remedy social, psychological and physical deficiencies, which are the products of macrosociological forces affecting the lives of its clients.

We would like to dwell on the advice and warnings of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (1994) that are intended for anyone doing research on youth gangs. This Canadian source proposes a procedure which, in the context of municipalities, is suitable for challenging local views, suggestions and action. The reader will see that the suggestions deal first of all with violence among young people and the social perceptions of this violence.

In its recent paper, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities advises caution when it comes to what people think about gangs: *Several communities misunderstand the situation when dealing with youth violence (FCM, 1994, p. 7).* This misunderstanding stems from various factors, some of which are as follows.

First of all, the differing views regarding what constitutes violence among youths: everyone (the stakeholders, researchers, police officers, educators and the public) do not define a gang using the same criteria. The definitions of violence may be different at times: some are based on views, on the youth's exterior aspect. We must bear in mind that ... *it may have to do with youths "hanging out" in shopping centres and who have not been often involved in acts of violence. On the other hand, the definitions can be restricted to more organized youth gangs characterized by criminal and violent behaviour. Therefore, we have to be careful! Organized youth gangs which are bent on*

violence are rare. A large portion of the acts of violence being blamed on youths are committed in special circumstances and, in many cases, it is a temporary and spontaneous phenomenon that is unpremeditated (FCM, 1994, p. 8).

Muddled and inaccurate data are conducive to false estimates of the extent of the phenomenon or, rather, the inability to interpret these data.

Secondly, agencies are apt to exaggerate the extent of violence: *When available, school data can reflect a broad range of behaviours, such as verbal violence, that certain observers do not consider to be violence. Agencies working with high risk youths are exposed to a type of violence that is not typical of the sort of violence found in the community. The reports founded on such models can falsify the public's perceptions regarding the extent of violence among the young people of a community (FCM, 1994, p. 8).*

Thirdly, regarding the proper procedure for responding and lending "a hand" to these young people, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities feels that: *A misconception of the violence found among the youths of your community can lead to serious problems. Young people can be unfairly labelled by the public. An entire "service" sector, such as the school system or social housing, can be considered as raising problems when, in fact, these are nothing more than a few incidents. Communities can, without reason, draw from limited resources, for example by stepping up their law enforcement efforts to solve a problem which is in fact very insignificant (FCM, 1994, p. 8).*

SUMMARY: It has been noted that, in the 50's and 60's, the policies geared towards youths were primarily of a preventive nature. In the 70's, they were more aimed at mobilizing the population and repression. Repression prevailed throughout the late 70's and the 80's. At present, there are five strategies being mainly used, with various combinations of these in most cases. The repression strategy remains the most popular.

Developing action strategies to deal with youth gangs is a complex task. Several factors must be

taken into consideration. Consequently, various thoughts and critical remarks are submitted by the authors on the subject. It is first of all noted that one of the errors on the part of the population and the authorities consists in not responding right away whenever a gang emerges and in overreacting whenever problems become too obvious to be ignored. This is due in part to the fact that only those people who are more directly affected will tend to file complaints while the others could not care less. Whenever action is initiated, it never comes as a result of widespread demand on the part of the population and the ensuing lack of cooperation is the consequence (Monti, 1993). Social policies do not work because, according to Jankowski, everyone points the finger at poverty and the lack of opportunities, but no one is doing much about these two problems. The few jobs that are created are for a small number and do not provide long term opportunities. Finally, the decision-makers wind up focusing on stiffening the laws because they cannot alleviate the problem of urban poverty. The end result of repressive legislations is a further stigmatization of underprivileged male youths who are gang members (Jackson, 1993). Furthermore, the police officers who enforce these laws are giving added impetus to the antisocial tendencies of the gang members (Spergel, 1995; Monti, 1993). The repressive strategies are discredited by the authors in general.

As for the community approach, on of its staunchest advocates (Spergel, 1995) points out that its effectiveness is being undermined by a lack of understanding of the complexity of the links between youth gangs and the more encompassing problems of society, such as urban poverty, and the lack of educational and job opportunities. The decisions made by the various government departments concerned leave something to be desired.

The authors appear to agree on the need to better understand gangs to avoid unwarranted labelling and social damage stemming from ill-advised action (Spergel, 1995; Jankowski, 1991: FCM, 1994). A distinction must also be made between the strategies that are intended for the individual members of gang and those that are intended for the gang as such (Elder, 1996). It is also claimed that a better knowledge of cultural communities would facilitate the implementation of suitable social policies (Joe, 1993).

It is further noted that if the funds used to pay for the inherent costs of the legislations and correctional services that are rather ineffective in remedying gang-related problems could be put to better use if they were invested directly invested in the communities (Jackson, 1993). It is further suggested that cooperation among the police officers, citizens and community agencies holds more promise than naive attempts to reduce gangs (Spergel, 1995). This would enable the police to focus more on social action and enable the youths to alter their image of the police. Short (1990) goes further and even feels that the police is in an advantageous situation. The police officers' role could be drastically changed by focussing less on crime and more on strengthening and lending support to the community in its attempts to develop itself. If the police could focus on mediation, community agencies, research methods and an interpretation of the research, both the police and the community would undergo an overhaul. The objective of such an approach is to promote a community in which family life, work, religion, education, the police and the other institutions are a reflection of common values.

In Canada, there are also programs that are youth-oriented. These are covered in Chapter Two (Projects Underway).

9. CONCLUSION

The social perception of youth gangs has been modified since the 20's when the first researchers began to show an interest. The theories that were in vogue twenty years ago no longer seem relevant today and those, who are interested in youth gangs today must also adapt to the new social context and look beyond the stereotypes that have a considerable impact on this social group which, in too many cases, gets bad press from the media that are partly responsible for such bias.

Both in the United States and in Canada, we have seen that, on the whole, the researchers are concerned with the lack of standard definitions. Furthermore, it is noted that those who deal with street gangs in their work (i.e. researchers, police officers, educators, social workers) are not talking

the same language and do not approach this subject the same way. Each of these professions appears to approach the problem according to its own perception of youth gangs, its occupation and its interests. Their policies and response are based on this approach.

Even though there have been reports, in the United States for example, of an increase in gang-related serious crimes, these serious crimes account for only a small percentage of serious crimes as a whole, whether violent or not. Likewise, in Canada, the official statistics point to an increase in violent crimes. However, the crime rate among youths has levelled off during the past five to ten years. Consequently, caution must be exercised in interpreting the statistics.

In terms of response strategies, when you sum up the findings of the various authors consulted, it can readily be seen that certain strategies must be avoided while others appear to show more promise. Every author concurs that the repressive approach is to be avoided. On the one hand, this approach merely intensifies the antisocial tendencies of young gang members and any action taken is geared towards the young people, the poor, the minorities and the slum dwellers. Furthermore, the costs inherent to this type of response and the costs pertaining to correctional services are deplored. These funds could be put to better use if they were directly invested in the community, according to the authors.

The problem of youth gangs and society's broader problems are closely interconnected. Poverty, the lack of jobs and educational opportunities are fundamental problems that we must deal with if we wish to have an impact of the living conditions of these youths and, ipso facto, on their activities. Several authors also concur that it is imperative to better understand gangs and to be careful not to confuse the strategies that are intended for gangs with those that are intended for their members.

The community approach appears to be the most promising. But no matter how dedicated those working in the field happen to be, be they police officers, social workers, volunteers in a community agency or educators, the effectiveness of this approach can be nipped in the bud if there is no collective political will, **at all levels,** to react to the overall socio-economic plight of youths. We

need more than bans, we need... *to restructure the local economies and to provide young people with economic and social alternatives to gang activities, in order to solve gang-related problems* (Monti, 1993).

We will conclude this first part of the report on a thought from Stan Cohen that could inspire several of us in our efforts to understand the youths in our society:

> *"The ideology of doing good remains powerful...It is the essence of a humanistic civilization to exert power and to do good at the same time"* (Stan Cohen, 1985).

CHAPTER TWO

SYNOPTIC SUMMARIES

1. INTRODUCTION

The second chapter consists of a list of reference works dealing with the subject of "Youths and Gangs". The reference works are summarized and/or reviewed.

Our goal is to provide a work tool to the readers who wish to learn more about the subject. The summaries and/or reviews accompanying each of the references make it possible to make a selection, with these objectives in mind.

The books and articles presented in this chapter were produced between 1990 and 1997 and are, for the most part, American. Where appropriate, we have singled out the works that clearly stand out in comparison with the others.

While the US situation differs in many ways from the Canadian one, Canada has always tended to follow closely the policies of its Southern neighbour. Consequently, it is useful to read these in order to weigh their significance and to realize their relevance in an American or Canadian context.

2. REFERENCE MATERIAL - SUMMARIES

***Collectif (1995) *La violence chez les jeunes; compréhension et intervention;* Eds. Science et Culture.

Only one of the articles on street gangs was written by an MUCPD police officer, who is an investigator assigned to the Antigang Section. The work is based more on the author's point of view than on that found in scientific works.

***Collins Jessie Joe: the Story of an Ex-Gang Member. (in) *The Gang Journal,* Vol. 1, No. 3, 1993.

Life story: an interview with a former gang member who, at the time of the interview, was 68 years old. The interview confirms both the theory of differential opportunities and that of social disorganization. Judging by the content, his underlying motives when he joined a gang consisted of a yearning for social status, a need to gain respect and a need to earn a reputation.

***Cummings, Scott; Monti, Daniel (1993) *Gangs: the Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States,* State University of New York Press.

This book comprises several articles written by different authors who each broach various aspects of the youth gang phenomenon. The foreword given by Cummings and Monti contains a status report; an article by Joan Moore on Gangs, Drugs and Violence (Ch. 2) demystifies the far too obvious links that are made between these themes but that are difficult to confirm in serious studies: an article by Diego Vigil on the Southern California's Chicano gangs (Ch. 5); an article by Patrick Jackson on California's legal responses to youth gangs and the results thereof (Ch. 11); an article by Cummings and Monti on the policies implemented, the social sciences and the underclasses (Ch. 13).

***Cummings, Scott; Monti, Daniel J. (1993) Foreword (in) *Gangs: the origins and impact of contemporary youth Gangs in the United States,* State University of New York Press (p. VII - X).

The authors have come up with a clear and stimulating approach of the phenomenon. According to them, we must change our understanding of the phenomenon because the phenomenon is changing. For example, gangs are no longer confined to slums. They are just as likely to surface in fashionable neighbourhoods, among the middle

class as in the suburbs. Gangs may be made up of youths originating from ethnic minorities. However, *there are still some predominantly white gangs and racially mixed gangs have become more common.* There is an increase in the number of gangs made up exclusively of females. Youths tend to remain in gangs longer than before. There are more gangs involved in serious and lucrative crimes. They are more mobile, more hostile towards the institutions and people in the communities.

It is difficult to suggest what has to be done to cut down on gangs and gang-related problems. There are two important factors to explain the manner in which gangs are approached by the adult world, i.e.: 1-They are perceived as a problem that falls within the purview of the police. 2-The police strategies are not particularly effective in coping with the immediate symptoms or causes at the root of the gangs' illegal activities.

One important observation: Based on what little is known about the phenomenon, one thing is certain: Gangs derive great satisfaction and a reinforcement of their behaviour from their conflicts with real or imaginary enemies. The policies that are based on the imprisonment of members and the elimination of gangs are more likely to promote than to deter gang activities.

The use and development of community projects appear to be factors that must reduce or at least control the activities of certain gangs. It appears also that the neighbourhood groups mobilized against gangs can either reduce gangs or remove them from the neighbourhoods in question.

When the adults of conventional institutions are competent, gang members can find themselves under closer supervision and restrict their activities accordingly. The gang can sustain itself and become a bridge between youths and adults. To accomplish this, the public and private leaders and the neighbourhood people must

develop more interest in the investment of time and resources in communities in which gangs and gang members are found.

***Cummings, Scott; Monti, Daniel J., Public Policy and Gangs: Social Science and the Urban Underclass (in) *Gangs: the Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States,* State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 305-320.

This paper is a conclusion to the book and examines the restrictions and constraints that impact on the contribution of social sciences to gang-related public policy. Two main themes are developed and analysed in a critical manner, i.e. 1. the uncertain role of the knowledge of social sciences in the process of mapping out policies and 2. an apparent lack of interest on the part of the public in problems relating to the urban underclass. It also looks at the lack of social programs for youths drawn to a gang and its activities.

Summary of findings: One of the conclusions is that social science research has little influence over the trend in urban policies. In spite of the malaise felt internationally and the changes in the nature of social policies, *"social sciences have an important political role to play in shaping the intellectual debate over the urban underclass, the specific problems they encounter, and the types of public policies most likely to be effective"*. Relations between the researchers and policy-makers are not always smooth, not always conciliatory, as the forbidden interests are not the same. While many researchers have modified their objects of interest to adjust to the new policies, very few are making a serious attempt to stand up for the poor, the minorities and the unemployed. To describe the type of relationship that exists between the social science researchers and the decision-makers, he quotes C. Wright Mills (1959): *To appeal to the powerful on the basis of any knowledge we now have is utopian in the foolish sense of that term. Our relations with them are more likely to be only such relations as they find useful, which is to say that we become technicians accepting*

their problems and aims, or ideologists promoting their prestige and authority."

While making reference to the various articles published in the book, the authors suggest research clues in three different fields, i.e. 1. We need to better understand the psychological factors that are related to gang behaviour. 2. We need to know more about the links between the structure of a community and the gang. 3. We must take into account, in any research on gangs, the variations in the development of the underclass, particularly its relationship with the larger urban economy. We need to know how gangs adapt to the lack of opportunities created by a downturn in the regional economy. According to William Wilson, the public policies that are intended to do away with discrimination and protect the civil rights of all citizens do not necessarily mean a material improvement in the quality of urban life and the creation of jobs and opportunities.

As we enter the postindustrial economic are, we are inclined to think that the policies aimed at stimulating the economy, employment and training will likely have more impact on the underprivileged classes than any other policy.

***Destro, Robert A. Gangs and Civil Rights (in) *Gangs: the Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States* (the origins and impact of contemporary youth gangs in the United States, State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 277-304.

This article deals with the conflicts between law enforcement against gangs and civil rights. The law is applicable mainly with respect to the minorities protected by civil rights.

***Fagan, Jeffrey, Social Process of Delinquency and Drug Use Among Urban Gangs (in) *Gangs in America* Ronald Huff ed. (Newberry Park: Sage Publications, 1990, p. 183-219).

Comparative Statistical Study, made in the Cities of Chicago, Los Angeles and San Diego, between adolescent members of a gang and adolescent non-members of a gang. The study reveals that, whether they are members of a gang or not, adolescents are characterized by "delinquent" behaviours that are more or less serious and that they abuse drugs. However, adolescents who are not members of a gang take less often part in such behaviours and their "delinquency" is deemed less serious.

***Federation of Canadian Municipalities (1994). *Violence Among Youths and Youth Gang Activity. Replies to Community Concerns.* Solicitor General of Canada and Justice Canada.

A very interesting work published by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. One of the rare documents that provides an overview of the violence phenomenon among youths and of the youth gang phenomenon in Canada. Apart from a description of the phenomenon, there is a section on how to assess the phenomenon and to deal with it in our environment, in order to avoid creating other problems.

This document is a "must" for anyone interested in youth gangs and it attempts to establish action tools. This document deals with violence among youths and youth gangs in Canadian municipalities, which makes it a valuable instrument. The Canadian reader does not need to place the data in a Canadian context. The data are drawn from the Canadian context.

***Felkenes, George T.: Becker, Harold K. Female Gang Members: A Growing Issue for Policy Makers (in) *Journal of Gang Research,* Vol. 2, No. 4, 1995, (1-10).

This article deals with the members of a gang and is included in a more extensive research that compares Hispanics who are members of one of the gangs studied in Los Angeles County with Hispanics who are non-members of a gang. The approach is a statistical one based on a questionnaire given to 142 gang members, 40 of whom

were girls. The majority of the 40 girls were between the ages of 15 and 19.

The study shows that gang members have been cast aside and rejected by the social institutions and who drop out of school: 41.2% of the girls had quit school, while 58.8% were still in school. It seems that alternative forms of socialization are needed.

Findings of the study: Indeed, gang members have been cast aside and rejected by the social institutions: in 30.8% of cases, girls join a gang for company and friendship. They also indulge in violent and/or criminal behaviour. According to the material, 50% of the girls are involved in criminal and/or violent behaviour: 12.9% claim to be ready to kill on request and 31% claim to be ready to fight in order to defend their turf. 41% of the girls have aspirations to succeed as opposed to 21% of the boys. 5% of the girls wish to be lifetime members and 10% consider their lives to be failures. Contrary to the studies on the phenomenon, 61% were educated by both parents and 10% claim to have experienced occasional good times with their families. 91% of the girls believe in God and 18% regularly attend church. Only 17.1% sell drugs as a source of income. Of this 17.1%, 20% earn as much $699. per week, while the others earn less than $200. a week. When you consider the group as a whole (i.e. girls and boys), 21.6% are employed on a full time basis and 23.5% on a part time basis. In the final analysis, the majority earn less than $300. a week.

***Franklin Elder, Alice P., Inside Gang Society: "How Gang Members Imitate Legitimate Social Forms" (in) *Journal of Gang Research,* Vol. 3 No. 4, 1996, (1-12).

The author shows how gangs imitate legitimate social patterns, to wit the standards and structures that are found in society as a whole. It also shows how gang members view society in its structure and in its standards. Certain gang models and practices compare with legitimate patterns of society as a whole.

Research Findings: This paper concurs with the studies that describe the gang as an entity

that meets the social and economic objectives of the members. This study establishes that gangs are more than incoherent entities made up of delinquents. Gangs are organized entities with a membership stability of as much as 4.5 years. In practice, it is important that the social policies make a distinction between the correctional strategies for individual members and the strategies that are aimed at the organization as such. Considering that the (social) organizational behaviour differs from individual behaviour, the prevention and intervention efforts must not be restricted solely to treating the individual when it is a question of finding effective means to solve the gangs' violence problems. A first step to be taken in controlling the organizational development of gangs may be to launch a counter attack against the belief system and the socializing ideology of its members.

Franklin Elder also notes that a gang is viewed by young people as being the sole alternative in adjusting to the lack of economic opportunities. If we combine this factor with their belief that society is no longer interested in what is happening to them, we can expect that several young people will remain vulnerable to recruiting and socializing efforts on the part of the gangs.

***Hagedorn, John M., Back in the Field Again: Gang Research in the Nineties (in) *Gangs in America* Ronald Huff ed. (Newberry Park: Sage Publications, 1990, p. 240-259).

Hagedorn notes that, with respect to the gang phenomenon, we need new ways of studying it, for 4 reasons, i.e. first of all, because times have changed and very little empirical research has been done recently on modern gangs, 2. because recent research suggests that gangs have fundamentally changed, 3. because gangs are described as being too different and, in some cases, similar from one research to the next, 4. because gangs are likely to be described differently when looked at in their own environment rather than in the light of homicide statistics, jail interviews and official statistics in general gathered by the parties concerned.

Thoughts on the field work method accounts for a good part of his work. He refutes

one by one the arguments against the field method and provides ample justification for its use. He finds that, at this point, what we need is research that views the underprivileged classes as research participants and not only as data.

Hébert, Jacques; Hamel, Sylvie; Savoie, Ginette J. (1997). *Plan Stratégique Jeunesse et Gang de Rue*, a report submitted to the Montreal Urban Community Police department.

Study financed by the Montreal Urban Community Police Department and completed by the "Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes" and the "Institut universitaire des Centres jeunesse de Montréal".

The study comprises 6 main segments, the first of which deals with the extent of the gang phenomenon and the second with how a gang emerges, develops and operates. The third segment deals with just what is a gang. The fourth segment provides information on youths who are members of a gang and on the factors that make them more vulnerable. In the fifth segment, the researchers wonder to what extent gangs are responsible for juvenile crime and violence. As for the sixth and final segment, it discusses solutions known to be effective and promising. The recommendations are clearly in favour of a joint approach involving the community, the various agencies, systems and stakeholders, to include the individual, the family and the community at the same time.

***Horowitz, Ruth, Sociological Perspectives on Gangs (in) *Gangs in America*, Ronald Huff Ed. (Newberry Park; Sage Publications, 1990, p. 37-54).

One of the author's objectives is to show why, in spite of the sociologists' complaints concerning a lack of standard definitions, it is not necessary, in order to conduct research on gangs, to reach a consensus on the parameters of what constitutes a gang. First of all, each of the groups that are concerned with gangs, to wit the police, the media, the community and the social science researchers, has its own definition and

these groups will never reach a consensus on a common definition. Furthermore, definitions have a tendency to steer research in such a way as to narrow down the research topic and issues. New concepts can lead to a development of the issues and a development of understanding. She provides as an example the organizational analysis of M.S. Jankowski (1991) and the study of Zatz (1987) on the sensual dynamics of illegal activities that have significantly contributed to the way we see gangs. According to Horowitz, in spite of the extensive research on gangs, there are still several questions that have yet to be asked.

***Houston, James G. An interview with Lewis Yablonsky: the Violent Gang and Beyond (in) *the Gang Journal*, Vol.1, No. 2, 1993, (59-67).

Material that deals with both the social structure of a gang and, on the other hand, with the damage caused by a gang. Yablonsky wrote in 1965 *Experiences with the Criminal Community.* This author is a member of the Chicago School and his research is the result of field work, as in the cases of Whyte and Trasher.

***Huff, Ronald C (1990) *Gangs in America*, Huff Ed., Sage Publications. First Edition.

Articles from various authors, some of which are summed up in this bibliography. See the material by Fagan, Hagedorn, Horowitz, Short and Miller.

***Institut Canadien de recherche sur le droit et la famille (1994) *La violence chez les jeunes: Guide pour la police.*

The authors point out the problems encountered by the resear rs, in light of the controversy surrounding the definitions of gangs and groups. However, the purpose of the guide is not to solve this problem. The focus is more on collective violence among youths, taken in its broadest sense.

According to the authors, the Canadian situation differs from that of the Americans as regards the frequency and nature of the collective demonstrations of violence among youths. Certain pertinent data are provided. It is still important to take into account the method of collecting statistical data on crime and different meanings to the notion of collective violence throughout the country, which does not make it possible to possess reliable or accurate data on the frequency of acts of violence.

The authors give the following warning to guide users: *Users must exercise caution when applying this information to the circumstances in their communities or to specific acts of violence committed by youth gangs. It is every bit in their interest to take a careful look at the real situations in their communities before informing the general public or preparing response measures. A distorted or false picture of the situation can lead to misuse of public and private resources, for example, law enforcement resources. This situation can also lead to a serious misunderstanding and conflicts between youths and adults within a community. When the members of a community do not see a problem the same way or when their points of view appear to be irreconcilable, rhetoric and criticism can conceal the substantive issues.*

***Irvine, John (1996) *An Evaluation of Intervention Programs For Potential And Current Street Gang Members,* Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Paper submitted during a Criminology course at the University of Manitoba. The material is of a methodological nature and is used to prepare an assessment of prevention programs set up to deter youth gang membership. This paper is essentially theoretical. It deals with preparation for research. No data compiled or analytical findings are presented.

***Jackson, Patrick; Rudman, Cary. Moral Panic and the Response to Gangs in California (in) *Gangs: the Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States,* Cummings & Monti Eds. State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 257-275.

This is a study on the response given to gangs in the 80's. This is a review of the laws and policies implemented in response to gang-related problems. The material used comprises the legislations concerning gangs and gang-related laws from 1981 to 1991, in the State of California that is reputed to have one of the most serious gang problem in the United States.

This study is part of a broader investigation into how response via social control developed. In this paper, the focus is placed on the laws of the State. The idea in this case is to verify the effectiveness of existing laws and possible alternatives to these laws. These laws turned out to be ineffective in deterring, reducing and eliminating gangs. To the contrary, the problem worsened.

***Jackson, Susan & Al. (1994) *The Youth Gang! Crime Problem in Greater Vancouver.*

The object of the research is to determine the extent of the youth gang-related problem in the Greater Vancouver Area. After studying the material, the researchers noted, with satisfaction, that the situation was under control. During the last years, there has been a concerted effort at various government levels to control this problem. Consequently, it seems that youth gangs were not a major problem in the Vancouver Area at the time the study was done. Occasionally, the problem resurfaces; however, it seems that the fear of gangs is a more serious concern than the actual existence of a gang-related threat.

Gangs are considered a normal phenomenon of modern cities and it is stated in the study that gang members are not all involved in criminal activities Traditionally, gangs are made up of young males; however, there is an increase in the number of girls involved in gangs and in crime in general. Research has shown that their role consisted in being the girlfriends of male members or being prostitutes. Very few youths are seriously involved. Several youths are a nuisance; however, they are not criminals. Adult criminals recruit and use youths to carry out criminal activities.

Thus, the youths come close to falling in the high risk category and running into dealings with the law.

***Jankowski, Barbara: Les Gangs aux États-Unis: Bilan de recherches (in) *Les Cahiers de la Sécurité intérieure,* July 1992: I.H.E.S.I.

An excellent research paper on gangs in the United States. The author addresses various youth gang-related themes. She presents, in this case, a history of youth gangs as well as a history of gang research, since the 20's, in the United States. She also dwells on the contemporary gangs, while stressing the topics that are most often broached by authors, including organization, links between drugs, gangs and violence, gang typology, gangs and prison, the emergence of a gang, recruiting, the connection between gang and Organized Crime, etc. She also touches on policies aimed at gangs, various action strategies and their effectiveness.

***Jankowski, Martin Sanchez (1991) *Island in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society,* Berkeley, University of California Press.

This author observed 37 gangs in Boston, Los Angeles and New York with the assistance of a former member and lived among Milwaukee gangs in the 80's. The author noted that the ineffectiveness of programs aimed at reducing gangs or eliminating them altogether is due to a lack of understanding of the youth gang problem on the part of the social sciences and, consequently, to public policies that failed to take into account an understanding of youth gangs. He looks at the individual members of a gang, the organization of a gang, the ties between the latter and the community and society in general, as well as the social policies that are aimed at reducing and/or eliminating gangs.

***Joe, Karen A. Delinquency in Chicago During the Roaring Twenties: Assembling Reality in Ethnography (in) *Journal of Gang Research,* Vol. 3, No. 2, 1995, (19-31).

Material dealing with the works of Trasher and Shaw, 20's authors from the School of Chicago. She is particularly interested in the qualitative method used by these authors. This method makes it possible to maximize an understanding of gangs and their dynamics, by compelling its users to get closer to the gangs via participant observation and/or interviews with the members.

***Joe, Karen A. The Legacy of Street Corner Society and Gang Research in the 1990's: an interview with William F. Whyte (in) *The Gang Journal,* Vol. 1, No. 4, 1993, (45-51).

Interview with ethnologist William F. Whyte who, 50 years earlier, i.e. in 1943, wrote *Street Corner Society*. This material focuses on Whyte's method and opinion regarding the earlier and present methods used to deal with the youth gang theme. Whyte is from the Chicago School and uses the qualitative method to youth gangs. He meets with youths and uses his interviews with them to better understand their motives, the gang dynamics and its environment, contrary to what is done today and where official statistical data are largely used.

***Joe, Karen A. Issues in Accessing and Studying Ethnic Youth Gangs (in) *The Gang Journal,* Vol. 1, No. 2, 1993 (9-22).

According to the author, there are major differences in the development of a gang, its activities and its organization depending on whether a gang is made up of young Asians, blacks, Hispanics or whites. It is important to have a good knowledge of the cultural community in which gangs evolve to implement appropriate social policies.

***Miller, Walter B., Why the United States Has Failed to Solve Its Youth Gang Problem (in) *Gangs in America,* Ronald Huff Ed. (Newberry Park: Sage Publications, 1990, p. 263-287).

According to Miller, it is clear that the United States have failed, not only to resolve the gang

problem, but also to prevent it from getting worse. How can a country as rich and as powerful throughout the world have failed so miserably with a youth minority? According to the author, there are still a few questions that have yet to be fully answered.

Generally speaking, the author feels that the US's failure stems from major flaws in the country's national policies. Overall, it has not succeeded in establishing gang control strategies. The problem is viewed from a local rather than a national perspective. Furthermore, programs are implemented without having made beforehand a reasonable theoretical demonstration of their effectiveness. Efforts to systematically assess the programs implemented have been discarded. The resources allocated for a gang problem are disproportionate in relation to the seriousness of the problems, i.e. they are simply insufficient. There is no organizational centre to take care of gang problems anywhere in the United States. Finally, there is a reluctance to deal with the implications of gang life on the social context.

***Moore, Joan (1993), Gangs, Drugs and Violence (in) *Gangs: the Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States,* Cummings & Monti Eds. State University of New York Press, p. 27-46.

The actual gang problem often gets lost in a muddle of stereotypes. Some are harmful, others are dangerously false. The first objective of the author is to identify a few of these falsehoods by identifying the origins of the misunderstanding. She particularly focuses on the link that is systematically established between a gang, violence and drugs, stating that it is far from being clearly established. She also discusses the operational impact of the stereotypes. The popular bias is mobilized and amplified by periodic onslaughts of fearmongering regarding the criminal behaviour of certain youths acting in gangs. They are commonly referred to as crime waves. The name given to the connection between stereotype and crime wave is "moral panic". "Moral panic" is built around pre-existing cleavages in our society,

be they classes or races. In the case of gangs, it is built on fears and ignorance of what is going on in the old neighbourhoods.

***Monti, Daniel (1994) *Wannabe: gangs in Suburbs and Schools,* Blackwell.

This book is the result of an analysis of several hundreds of interviews conducted in an American district comprising 14 municipalities and conducted among youths in elementary and high school. To get a better idea of the contents of this book, see the article by Daniel J. Monti entitled Origins and Problems of Gang Research in the United States in *Gangs,* Cummings and Monti Eds., State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 3-25. This article corresponds to the conclusion of his book.

***Monti, Daniel J. (1993), Introduction: Origins and Problems of Gang Research in the United States (in) *Gangs: the Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States,* Cummings & Monti Eds, State University of New York Press, P. 3-25.

The dramatic rise in the number of gangs over the last decade has taken the people by surprise and poses challenges for many. The legislatures and law enforcement agencies of several states, including Washington, DC, have hastily designed programs to "zero in" on the gang problem, but addressed less convincingly the conditions that are at the root of gang emergence.

At the same time, the Americans were concerned and outraged by the fatalities and innocent victims of gang confrontations.

When pressed to say something useful, the researchers had nothing more to rely on than the grossly outdated theories of the 60's. The social science researchers tried to convince the decision-makers; however, in most cases, they did not know what they were talking about.

This paper discusses how the social sciences have fallen so low. The author makes the connection between the original research done by Trasher in the 20's and the 30's and the present research.

***Palumbo, Dennis J; Eskay, Robert; Hallett, Michael, Do Gang Prevention Strategies Actually Reduce Crime? (in) *The Gang Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1993, (1-10).

This research is an assessment of the prevention programs implemented in the schools. One the researchers' findings is that youths do not have a negative attitude towards gangs. The authors believe that this brings to light the phenomenon of the social foundations of youth gang problems. Who are the requesters? The media, the politicians and the police. According to Palumbo et al, claiming that youth gangs are a problem is nothing new. The problem has more to do with the fact that the policies implemented to deal with gangs have always been targeted against the minorities, the poor and those living in slums. Furthermore, we know very little about the gang phenomenon. Has the phenomenon gotten worse and, if so, why? What is the connection between gangs, drugs and crime? Why is it that it has only been since the 80's that the youth gang phenomenon has turned into a social problem? The authors have no answers to these questions and, until they do, they are not in a position to know whether or not the prevention strategies work or not, or even if it is the only good question to ask.

***Sanders, William B. (1994) *Gangbands and Drive-bys: Grounded Culture and Juvenile Gang Violence*

For years, sociologists have been attempting to understand gangs as social organizations. Since the 20's, they have been looking for what it is in the structure of a gang that led to violent behaviours and other delinquent behaviours. This book seeks to reverse the issue to find out how the situation of violence in a gang moulds

the group that we refer to as a gang. The interactionist perspectives (Goffman), the ethnomethodology (Garfinkel) and postmodernism (Milovanovic) provide the tools used to study the problem..

***Selemedis, Helene (1992) *Youth Gangs/Groups,* Metropolitan Toronto Police, Toronto.

This document enables the reader to appraise the method used to tackle the problem of youth gangs in the Toronto Area through the various police forces involved.

Document produced by the Metropolitan Toronto Police containing an 11-page list of gangs of youths identified by the police forces of Toronto, Barrie, Durham, Halton Regional, Hamilton-Wentworth, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and the York Area. Representatives of each of these forces meet on a monthly basis and exchange information.

They have identified 335 youth gangs, including 105 who were involved in various criminal activities from 1991 to 1992. Most of the gangs are made up of 2 to 10 members. The largest gangs have 20 to 35 members, ranging from 12 to 17 years of age. Most gangs are not organized and are leaderless. The most dominant members tend to control the gang. While most gangs are made up of boys, certain girl gangs begin to emerge. In gangs involved in drugs, the youngest members are used by the oldest as **"drug runners"**. Apart from providing member and gang profiles, she discusses what motivates them (a sense of belonging and security), the problems encountered in compiling statistics, gang migration and the weapons used. She also goes into the question of visual identification (gesture, clothes, etc...) and a few events that took place between September 1991 and August 1992 (5 events in total). This group finds that there is nothing to indicate that the youth gang phenomenon will come to a halt, that the Young Offenders Act is inadequate.

***Short, James F., New Wine in Old Bottles? Change and Continuity in American Gangs (in) *Gangs in America*, Ronald Huff Eds. (Newberry Park: Sage Publications, 1990, p. 223-239).

According to the author, the recent studies, dealing with gang-related problems, reveal new urgencies with respect to old problems. This work covers the recent empirical studies and the challenges they pose. Assessing human behaviour, including the effects of the programs implemented to control the delinquency of an individual, gang or community is very difficult. What is clear, regardless of the success of the efforts to punish, rehabilitate or any other means of controlling delinquency, new offenders will still surface when the forces and the process that lead to delinquent behaviour have changed.

This is a macrosociological study, ranging from global delinquency to neighbourhood delinquency. It describes the nature of the relationships between the criminal careers of individuals, groups and communities, based on the author's past research (Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Short, 1976) and more recent studies from other authors.

After describing gangs from 1965 to this date, the author concludes that many things have since changed and for the worst. A few gangs have become more sophisticated. Jailed gang members are disillusioned with the socio-economic situation and the political goals that they must contend with when they get out of jail. Many continue to be active members of gangs and an increasing number of lethal weapons are becoming available. Drug abuse and drug trafficking contribute to the devastation of community life. Wilson has already demonstrated how quickly poverty has become urbanized and underclasses have been created in society, particularly in neighbourhoods inhabited by minorities (1987).

James Coleman and Thomas Hoffer (1987) note, in their study concerning public and

private schools, that underprivileged students (i.e. the poor and the minorities) do particularly well in public Catholic schools, as compared with their peers attending public and private non-denominational schools. They explain this phenomenon on the basis of the concept of functional communities and of intergenerational relationships. Youths, who are poor, lack educational opportunities, organizational skills, self-confidence, and "social capital" (the intangible but genuine need for interpersonal relationships).

Functional communities provide opportunities, but do not guarantee "social capital". Coleman and Hoffer attribute the performance of Catholic school students to a commitment on the part of both the youths and their parents in the religious communities of their schools. They consider that the intergenerational exchange in the communities stems from structural changes in the family and the media's influence. Add to this the changes in the economic structure. The challenges posed by these changes emerge at several levels. The emphasis placed on the promotion of positive intergenerational relationships becomes the cornerstone of a functional community that creates social capital.

Crime prevention programs emphasize the protection of the community against crime while failing to look for the cause of the crime. The police is in a favourable position to identify social problems. It could support and strengthen the community rather than being its opponent as is often the case in crime-ridden neighbourhoods.
A number of experiments arose out of the interest of local populations to create something akin to a family and/or a community that could take care of the social problems of youths. Contrary to gangs that are often perceived by residents as a threat to their person and to their property, they were supported by their community. They incorporated the gangs rather than the other way around. Thus, the community and the gangs have become more acceptable to each other (Curtis, 1987; Woodson, 1981).

The author concludes by describing a project set up in Chicago and known as the Beethoven Project (Center for Successful Child Development in Chicago). This project has to do with 20,000 people, 90 % of whom are blacks, and three quarters of family heads are women. The Beethoven project comprises several segments, i.e. a variety of health-related social services are set up for both the children and the parents. Systematic follow-ups are done on all children born between 1987 and 1992, and their mothers. The project attempts to remedy the social, psychological and physical deficiencies that stem from macrosociological forces and that affect the lives of the targeted clientele.

***Spergel, Irving A. (1995) *the Youth Gang Problem: a Community Approach.* Oxford University Press.

Historical Perspective: The perception, extent, nature and seriousness of gang-related problems have drastically changed over the decades.

Limits of Research: The perceptions of the researcher or the police officer or the community group have produced a broad range of responses to youth gangs, depending on the interest of the person defining the social reality of the phenomenon. In order to conduct research and come up with effective policies aimed at identifying and accounting for gang crime rate, it is important to develop a general definition of the gang that takes into account the variability and interrelationships of characteristics such as age, race or ethnicity, sex, organization, the members' place of residence and the community's reaction.

Seriousness and Extent of the Problem: Considering the unreliability of the data, it is difficult to estimate the actual number of gangs and gang members, be it at the national level, the municipal level or within the context of an institution. In this case, a percentage estimate is more suitable. This percentage is approximately 5 to 10% of the adolescent population. More reasonably adequate

figures are available with respect to violent crimes, particularly homicides. Even though gang-related homicides are on the increase in several cities, it is clear that serious gang-related crimes account for only a small percentage of serious crimes, be they violent or non-violent. Gang-related violence is more prevalent in certain neighbourhoods or among certain ethnic groups or in fringe neighbourhoods. The data are clear: extremely violent gang-related crimes are committed by youths between 15 and 24 years of age, particularly the older ones.

Gangs, Drugs and Violence: The media and the police have established an irrelevant link between gangs, drug trafficking and violence. While there has been an increase in drug use and trafficking and greater involvement in violent crimes by gang members, the connection between these facts is not necessarily established and the facts are, in many cases, quite distinct. The gangs fighting each other are, traditionally, not an effective and adequate base for the distribution of drugs, in spite of the fact that individual members or sub-groups of the gang can indeed be used for drug trafficking. There is nothing to indicate that a large increase in drug trafficking can meaningfully be attributed to the activities of street gangs. The increases in gang violence and in drug trafficking by non-gang members have, for the most part, occurred independently from one another. However, there could be a link between drug trafficking and certain gang members who become pushers for adult criminal organizations.

Gang Demographics and the Gang Sub-Culture: Age, gender, culture, the economy and the structure of the community impact on the nature and development of gang-related problems.

Experience of Gang Members: Youths will join a gang for various reasons, i.e. status, money, power, the "high" that this gives them and a yearning for new experiences, particularly under conditions of social deprivation or when the community is unstable.

The Context: Gangs emerge in a context of local communities that are, in many cases, disorganized and/or impoverished. The process leading to gang membership arises out of an interaction between parental inability and the community's weakness. However, even good parents are incapable of

ensuring that their youth will steer clear of gangs, particularly in low income neighbourhoods where social problems are rampant.

Gangs and Organized Crime: Several variables are to be considered before a ling can be established between youth gangs and Organized Crime, including the community's structure, the nature of integration with conventional and criminal opportunities, race/ethnic group and the cultural traditions in specific areas and at specific times. Adult crime provides both a context and inspiration in the emergence of youth gangs.

Planning for Control Over Gangs and a Reduction of Violence: Over the last decades, we have found 4 main strategies in negotiating with gangs.

1. Local community organizations and citizens and association movements. 2. Social action, including psychological assistance, which is often unavailable. Psychological assistance is part of the response programs; however, it is little used because is not always readily available. 3. Providing social and economic opportunities, particularly jobs, training and academic upgrading. 4. Eliminating formal and informal control mechanisms. 5. Cooperation among various agencies and programs.

The best planning when the time comes to respond, to eliminate as well as prevent gang-related problems in the community hinges on a relevant analysis of the gang problem in the community and the required available resources to solve the problem. Emphasis must be placed on mobilizing the community and on developing opportunities for youths, particularly when the youth gang problem has prevailed for a long time. The proposal is not to deny the repression and social action strategies, but to prioritize a mobilization of the community and the creation of youth opportunities.

Mobilization of Local Communities and Evolution of National Policies: According to Spergel, the programs of the Department of Health and Social Services appear to be a step in the right direction in a well organized movement, made up of various agencies, to fight youth gang problems in various local communities. However, these programs have their limits in the sense that no one

knows whether much will be learned from the efforts made. Up until now, it was not clear that these programs were well managed and well evaluated. Yet, it would be an effective means of determining what is working and what is not working. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordination among the various government authorities (Manpower, Education, Health and Social Services, Urban Planning). A lack of cooperation does not lead to a common understanding of the problem and to the implementation of programs aimed at youth gang deterrence and reduction. Although the idea of an interconnection between community mobilization and the various government authorities appears to be the most logical and looms as a priority for resolving the youth gang problem, incorporating the various programs is not an easy task. By tradition, the various government authorities inclined to act independently from one another and in their own interest. Furthermore, the political structures operate in such a way as to fragment power. The most serious flaw in federal policy continues to be, not only, a lack of understanding of the complexity of relations between the youth gang problem and the broader problems of poverty (housing, the racial segregation suppression policy, immigration, population movements, academic flaws, training, youth employment, particularly among the older adolescent of minorities) but also a lack of interest in local community organizations in underprivileged environments.

The Police: A tough "lock-em-up" approach appears to be the most popular approach, particularly in the large centres that are experiencing gang-related problems.

Repression is based on the theory that most street gangs are criminal associations that must be tackled with a special unit that goes after them, identifies them and sets up strategies to target them. Police officials have argued that and shown that the collection of data through various systems of the legal apparatus has provided a more effective means of getting gang members off the street, taking them quickly to court and sending them to jail. However, the gang problem lingers, worsens and spreads. Furthermore, a string of constitutional issues have been raised regarding the targeting of gangs, without paying enough attention to the perpetration of individually committed crimes on the part of gang members. Furthermore, there is little to indicate that gang repression by specialized units has been effective in alleviating gang-related problems, both in smaller and larger cities.

An approach that is more focused on cooperation between the police, the public and community agencies appears to be evolving. This new approach makes it possible to assume that local community groups and agencies as well as the gangs themselves are all responsible in working together to put a lid on gang violence and criminal behaviour. The objectives are more realistic and are aimed at reducing gang violence rather than being naively aimed at reducing gangs. Armed with this new approach, the police emphasises both repression and social response, while obtaining the information that is relevant to prosecution and conviction and, at the same time, preventing serious crimes on the part of youth gangs and enabling youths to get out of gangs and to adjust to society in a more conventional way. Police officers learn to communicate with youths through respect and acceptance, giving them the impression that they are interested in them, while maintaining a certain control.

3. COMPLEMENTARY REFERENCE MATERIAL

Ball, R.A.; Curry, G.D. (1995). The Logic of Definition in Criminology: Purposes and Methods for Defining "Gangs" (in) *Criminology*, 33(2): 225-245.

Canada (1993) Études sur les fugueurs et les jeunes de la rue au Canada. Problèmes conceptuels et méthodologiques, Solicitor General.

Decker, S.H. (1996). Collective and Normative Features of Gang Violence (in) *Justice Quarterly*, 13, 2: 242-264.

Douyon, E. (1996). *Les jeunes et les gangs de rue:* Montréal: Mouvement Jeunesse Responsable.

Fagan, J. (1988). *The Social Organization of Drug Dealing Among Urban Gangs,* J. Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York.

Huff, Ronald C (1996). *Gangs in America,* Huff Ed., Sage Publications. Second Edition.

Jackson, Patrick G. Theories and Finding About Youth Gangs (in) *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, Vol. 21(2), June 1989.

Lavallée, D. (1995). Intervention auprès des parents confrontés au phénomène du gang. *Projet C.J.M.-C.P.C.U.M.* Rapport Inter-Étape.

Mathews (1990). *An Exploratory Typology of Youth Gangs/Groups in Metropolitan Toronto.* Toronto: Central Toronto Youth Services.

Needle, Jerome A.; Stapleton, William V. (1993) *Police Handling of Youth Gangs,* Washington DC, US Department of Justice.

Neely, David E. (1990). The Social Reality of Street Gangs (in) *Journal of Gang Research* (p.37-46). Vol.1, No. 1.

Peak, Kenneth J., Gangs: Origin, Outlook and Policy. Implications (in) *Visions for Change,* Muraskin & Roberts Eds. Prentice Hall, 1996.

Pryor, Douglas W. Public Perceptions of Youth Gang Crime, An Exploratory Analysis (in) *youth and Society a Quarterly Journal,* Vol. 24, No. 4, June 1993.

Quinn, James F.; Tobolowsky, Peggy M.; Downs, William T. The Gang Problem in Large and Small Cities: An Analysis of Police Perceptions in Nine States (in) *Journal of Gang Research,* Vol. 2, No. 2, (12-23).

Skolnick, Jerome H. (1990). The Social Structure of Street Drug Dealing (in) *American Journal of Police*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1990.

Spergel, Irving (1993), *Gang Suppression and Intervention.*

Spergel, Irving (1990). Youth Gangs: Continuity and Change (in) *Crime and Justice.* 12:171-275.

Trasher, F.M. (1928). *The Gang: A Study of 1313 Gangs in Chicago.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vidich, Arthur (1992) Boston's North End: An American Epic (in) *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.* Vol. 21, April: 80-102.

Vigil, James Diego. The Established Gang (in) *Gangs: The Origins and Impact of Contemporary Youth Gangs in the United States,* Cummings & Monti Eds., State University of New York press, 1993, p. 95-112.

Vigil, James Diego (1988). *Barios Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California,* Austin, University of Texas Press (work on Los Angeles' Hispanic gangs).

Whyte, W.F. (1992). In Defense of Street Corner Society (in) *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.* 21(April: 52-68).

Whyte, W.F. (1993). *Street Corner Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, William (1987). *The Truly Disadvantages,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 5-8.

Yablonsky, L. (1965). Experiences With the Criminal Community, in A.W. Gouldner, S.M. Miller (Eds): *An Applied Sociology: Opportunities and Problems* (p. 55-73). New York: Free Press.

Zatz, M.S. (1987). Chicano Youth Gangs and Crime: The Creation of Amoral Panic (in) *Contemporary Crises,* 11(2): 129-158).

4. ONGOING PROJECTS

Active Youth Network, Coquitlam, British Columbia: Police Department of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam: (604) 464-3461. Network made up of representatives of various agencies providing services to community youth, i.e. local police forces, the B.C. Transit Police, representatives of the local schools, the probation services and the local Crown attorney. Municipality of approximately 89,000 inhabitants.

Community Resource Committee: Problem-Solving Youth Violence and Street Gangs, Calgary Police Force.
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/abstracts/ed304217.html

CAMP Pilot Project, Winnipeg, Manitoba

1.Sandra Brown, communications officer, Western Economy Diversification, Winnipeg, Manitoba: (204) 983-0789.

2.Debbie Mackenzie, Communications Coordinator, Government of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba: (204) 945-7123

3.Valdence Buckley, Business Liaison, City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba: (204) 986-5549

http://www.wd.ca/fra/content/press/archive/1997/mar26-2a.html

The Center for Successful Child Development (Beethoven Project), Chicago, Illinois, Harriet Meyer, Executive Director: (312) 853-6080 and (312) 853-3337 for the fax machine.
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Compre/app1b.html

http://www.omhre.gov/mhr2/progs/88C0208.htm

La Maison des jeunes de Shippagan: Cpl Plourde (RCMP), Shippagan, New Brunswick (506) 336-6444. La Maison des jeunes de Shippagan has a web page on the site of the town of Shippagan: www.shippagan.com. The RCMP in Shippagan advocates community policing.

5. CONCLUSION

The presented literature survey consists of documents that were published between 1990 and 1997. These are the documents that are most likely to inform the reader of the largest number of possible aspects concerning youth gangs.

While certain documents give a historical account of youth gangs (Jankowski, B., 1994: Spergel, 1995), others focus on the status of the problem during the nineties (Felkenes; Hagedorn, 1990: Monti and Cummings, 1993: Spergel, 1995). Certain documents also make it possible to appraise the most innovative research methods that zero in the problems that are most specific to youth gangs. Indeed, certain of these aspects cannot be covered by traditional research (Jankowski, 1991: Collins, 1993: Joe, 1993).

All in all, the authors also discuss the response strategies by pointing out the effectiveness of some and pointlessness of others, in spite of the fact (as we have seen) that there is a lack of systematic assessment of the ongoing projects.

Consequently, there is clearly a lack of program assessment documents in our literature survey. For those who are striving to initiate projects or who have already done so, this is an important aspect for consideration. Assessing a program means ensuring greater effectiveness for future project implementations.

We also encountered some problems retrieving programs that were intended for young people and that are presently underway and/or accessing documents containing the results of such projects. However, those that are given as reference in section 4 of Chapter Two have been initiated for some time and are still underway.

Finally, the reader will note that, in all the documents selected, the authors are not so much seeking to explain the "why" and the "hows" pertaining to youth gangs and the crime rate related to such activity on the basis of the youths themselves, but instead to place gang activity in the broader social context of the socio-economic situation, education and social policy.

It is being realized more and more that more than police and social agency response is needed to resolve youth gang-related crimes. There must be a political will to give back to the young people the economic and social status that they deserve. Otherwise, all the efforts of the various stakeholders will have been in vain.